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**COMMUNAL VIOLENCE, FORCED MIGRATION & SOCIAL
CHANGE ON THE ISLAND OF AMBON, INDONESIA**

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Political and Social Sciences, option Political Sciences*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACF	Action Contre la Faim, Action Against Hunger
AMAN	Alliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara, Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago
BBR	Bantuan Biaya Rumah, Reconstruction Funds
BKM-Sultra	Badan Keturunan Masyarakat - Sulawesi Tenggara, Committee of the Descendants of Southeast Sulawesi Society
BKMM-Sultra	Badan Keturunan Masyarakat Maluku - Sulawesi Tenggara, Committee of the Descendants of Moluccan Society - Southeast Sulawesi
Brimob	Brigade Mobil, Mobile Brigade
DFID	Department of International Development
FKAWJ	Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, Communication Forum for the Congregation of the Followers of the Prophet
FKM	Front Kedalautan Maluku, Front for the Sovereignty of the Moluccas
GKPB	Gereja Kristus Perjanjian Baru, New Covenant Church of Christ
GPM	Gereja Protestan Maluku, Protestant Church of Maluku
HICN	Households in Conflict Network
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICMI	Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia, Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals

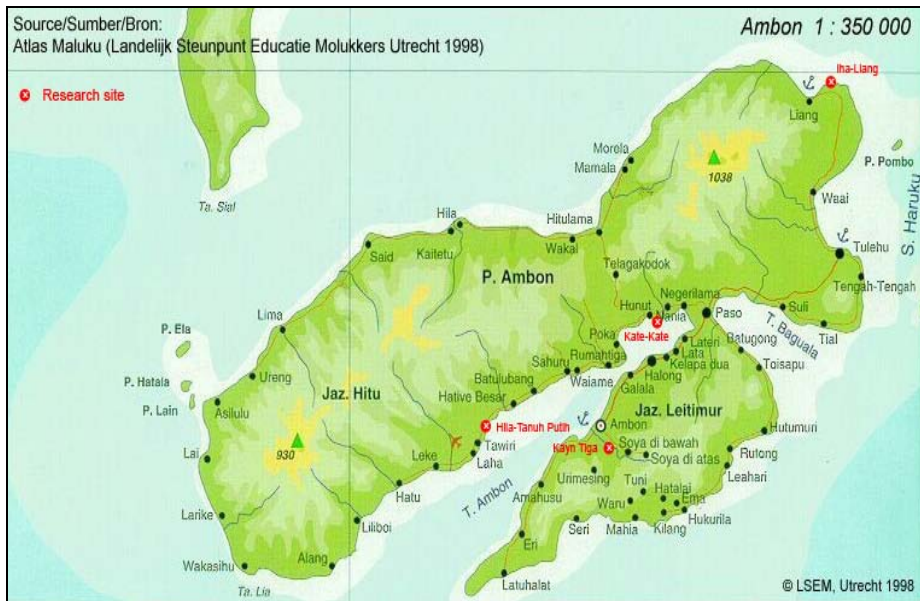
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
KNIL	Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger, the Dutch Colonial Armed Forces
Kopassus	Korps Pasukan Khas, Special Force Corps
LKDM	Lembaga Kebudayaan Daerah Maluku , Organization for Moluccan Culture
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières, Doctors Without Borders
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
Parkindo	Partei Kristen Indonesia, Indonesian Christian Party
PDI	Partai Demokrat Indonesian , Indonesian Democratic Party
PDI-P	Partai Demokrat Indonesia – Perjuangan, Democratic Party Indonesia – Struggle
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia, National Indonesian Party
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party
RMS	Republic Maluku Selatan, Republic of the South Moluccas
SPMM	Suara Perjuangan Muslim Maluku – Voice of the Moluccan Muslim struggle
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia, National Indonesian Army
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNOCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VOC	Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, United East India Company
Yon Gab	Battalyon Gabungan, Joint Battalion

LIST OF MAPS

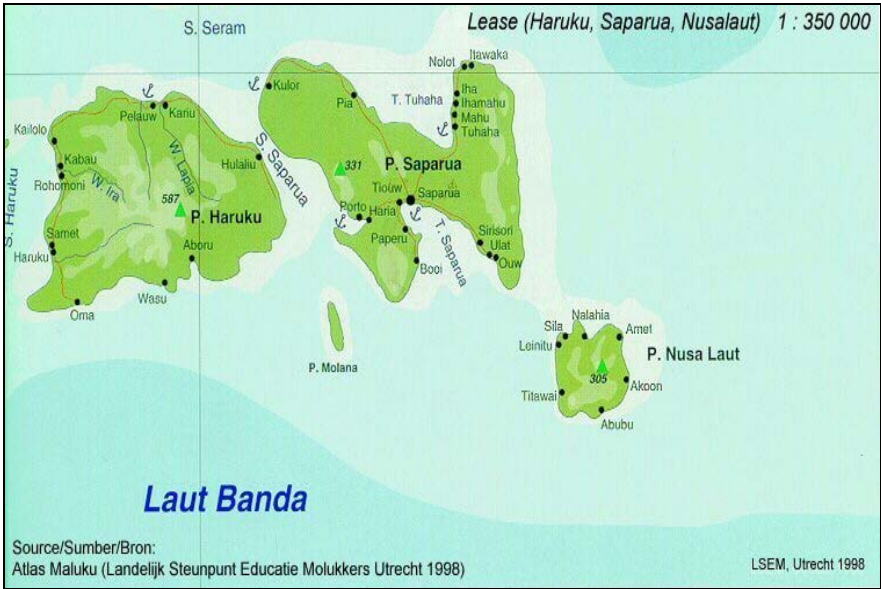
Map no. 1: Ambon city area



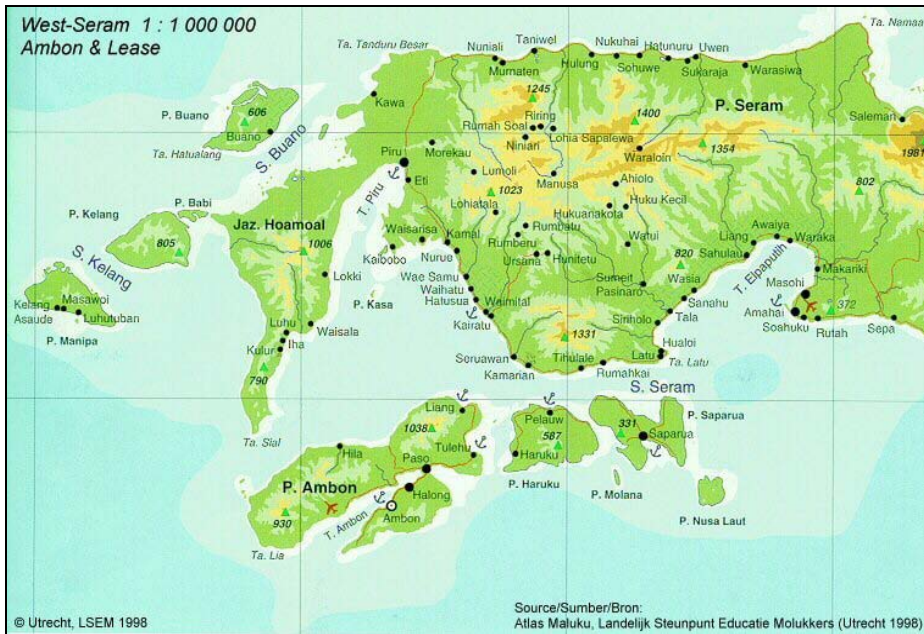
Map no.2: Ambon Island and research sites



Map no. 3: Haruku, Saparua and Nusa Laut



Map no. 4: West Seram



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My field research in Ambon and the writing of this dissertation has been a rollercoaster with many ups and downs. Starting from scratch as an inexperienced student, the downs prevailed in the beginning. At the end of my research, the ups were dominant and I increasingly realized what a privilege it is to be allowed to do research. The fact that my fieldwork turned out to be an extraordinary experience is due to the remarkable friendliness and helpfulness with which I was constantly surrounded in Indonesia, and which was sometimes simply moving. I consider it the highest achievement possible if this dissertation could, to a certain extent, do justice to the stories, opinions and emotions all the people in Ambon have shared with me. I also hope some of my Ambonese friends will not be disillusioned by what I have written but consider it a helpful contribution to some fundamental debates.

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I

Introduction

At its core, this dissertation is an ethnographic account about social change throughout and following a communal conflict on the Indonesian island of Ambon, which lasted from early 1999 until 2001/2002, and was fought between Christians and Muslims. This focus on social change differs from the majority of studies and debates on communal warfare in post-Suharto Indonesia - and Ambon in particular - which despite some notable exceptions, have generally started from the question: ‘why did people all of a sudden start to fight?’ Obviously, there is a wide range of answers to this question. For instance, there are scholars arguing that violence has always been an endemic, cultural feature in Indonesian society, due to the fact that Indonesians have learned ‘that they can be rewarded for violent behavior’ (Colombijn 2001: 38). Another stream of literature emphasizes political transformations at the national level after the fall of Suharto in May 1998 and how these were connected with political maneuvering at the regional level in order to explain the start of communal warfare (Bertrand 2004, Van Klinken 2007). This line of thought is also present in many case studies of communal conflict (see Aragon 2001 on Central Sulawesi, Van Klinken 2001, Bertrand 2002 and Goss 2004 on Ambon, Bubandt 2001, 2004 on North Maluku and Van Klinken 2006 on West Kalimantan). Others see military-based provocateurs

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as responsible for the eruption of communal violence in different places in Indonesia (Aditjondro 2001).

The centrality of this ‘why question’ in much of the literature on post-New Order communal warfare can partly be explained by the very communal character of this violence. The term communal conflict refers to those cases in which civil populations persistently fight each other over a certain period of time. These conflicts are therefore different from classic interstate war or civil wars in which armed groups fight the state for separatist or other reasons. The persistent nature of communal conflict also puts it apart from short-term communal riots that only last a couple of days. Throughout and after the implosion of the Suharto regime in 1998, Indonesia was confronted with a range of this sort of communal conflicts. Examples include Christian-Muslim bloodshed in Ambon in the province of Maluku (January 1999), and the city of Poso in the province of Central Sulawesi (December 1998). The province of North Maluku (August 1999) witnessed atrocious inter-religious warfare between Christians and Muslims and inter-ethnic violence among Muslims. Inter-ethnic riots between Dayaks and Madurese raged in Central (February 2001) and West Kalimantan (January 1998) and Malay-Madurese violence affected West Kalimantan (February 1999). All these different cases of communal conflict were characterized by a high level of intimate violence (Kalyvas 2006). This means that violence played between brothers, neighbours coming from the same soil but divided along communal fault lines. Intimate violence therefore goes beyond class differences, is not aimed

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at an external stranger or unknown occupier and strict divisions of roles between victim and perpetrator are blurred. The characteristics of these communal conflicts stands in contrasts to the traditional features of warfare during the New Order (1966-1998). During this 32-year period, conflicts such as the ones in East Timor, Aceh or Papua consisted of a civil militia fighting the centralist and military backed state. The ultimate aim of these armed groups was to gain independence or at least a far-reaching autonomy, an objective which was fiercely opposed by the Indonesian state. Apart from the killings of 1965/66, which ultimately ushered in a military dictatorship, during the 32-year New Order regime, communal conflict was present but never on such a massive scale as shortly after the fall of the New Order.¹ It therefore seemed as if the implosion of the New Order had forced scholars of Indonesian society to look for new frameworks in order to explain this new sort of civil unrest (Schulte Nordholdt 2003, Purdey 2004).

1.1. Going beyond the why question

The intimate character of these communal conflicts which, at first sight, lacked a clearly-cut ideological discourse or obvious economic motive, made many wonder why these people all of a sudden started killing each other.

¹ The most notable exception is the province of West Kalimantan which already during the New Order experienced 'sustained, non-separatist bloodletting' (Davidson 2008a: 11)

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Obviously, there are examples of researchers departing from this basic question such as Bräuchler (2003) who elaborated on the use of cyberspace in the communal conflict, and Spyer (2002) who worked on the role of media and rumors. Nevertheless, these examples are few and in general, the 'why people start to fight question' remains central to the majority of the literature on the communal conflict in Ambon. Although this question is obviously a key in coming to grips with communal conflict, some deficiencies can be noted.

First, the start of the conflict is too often taken as the endpoint of the analysis. Strong attention is paid to all sorts of historical socio-political and economic factors in the build up to the violence but little attention is paid to the particular genesis of the communal warfare. In a context of persistent warfare however, conflicting parties alter and new fields of contention and reconciliation come to the surface. In other words, the start of a conflict cannot be solely treated as an endpoint but should be understood as a process which constitutes new dynamics, logics and meanings (Kalyvas 2003, 2006; Keen 2002; Richards 2005). In a special issue of the *Journal of Peace Research*, different authors have elaborated why some conflicts last longer than others, instead of asking why conflicts simply erupt. A broad range of answers is given to this complex question. For instance, Fearon (2004) states that so-called 'sons of the soil conflicts' - similar to the sort of communal warfare described above - which involve a struggle to access land tend to last longer. Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom (2004) see a correlation between a

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low per capita income and high inequality on the one hand and the endurance of civil wars on the other. Other accounts state that - quite logically - an effective state bureaucracy and a strong government army limits the likelihood and endurance of civil war (De Rouen and Sobek 2004, Herbst 2004). All in all, this literature clearly illustrates how apart from the question why people start to fight, as much attention should be paid asking for what reasons people keep on fighting, how a conflict escalates in time and space or why new actors become involved or disengage from the violence. Illustrative in this regard for the debates about communal conflict in post-Suharto Indonesia is also that little attention has been paid so far to understand why the violence substantially subsided at a certain time.

A second, even more important point, is that by solely focusing on the question why people start to fight, conflicts tend to be reduced to a story of violence and destruction. Yet, in any conflict region in the world, more is going on than killings and demolition. Although I do not intend to downplay the many horrible things that happen in these contexts, conflict cannot simply be reduced to destruction. Scholars such as Duffield (1998, 2001), Cramer (2006) and Keen (2008: 4-21) argue that this view of war as destruction goes back to the classic liberal interpretation of violence representing war (bad) as the distortion of a natural, peaceful order and has therefore come to be perceived as the antithesis of development (good). Nevertheless, as these authors rightly argue, all sorts of developments occur throughout warfare. This can be evidenced by a broad literature which studies how people, in all

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possible ways, attempt to cope in environments characterized by chronic insecurity. This literature developed from the late eighties/early nineties onwards and is illustrative of how development studies have increasingly shifted their attention to the household and individual level of society, leaving behind overtly structuralistic, (neo-) Marxist inspired analysis's of poverty and marginalization or top-down dependency approaches (Sillitoe 2002, De Haan and Zomers, 2005). Probably the most outspoken proliferation of this micro-perspective is the popularity of livelihoods analysis. Mainly initiated by Anglo-Saxon research and policy institutes such as DFID (Department of International Development), ODI (Overseas Development Institute), IDS (Institute of Development Studies) and IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development), this framework tries to explain how livelihood strategies are pursued by drawing upon a portfolio of assets to cope with a particular vulnerability context. Many scholars have employed this framework in order to understand how conflict affects particular livelihood strategies. A typical example is the Livelihoods and Chronic Conflict Working Paper Series, published by the ODI.² Other examples where this livelihoods framework has been applied include Ohlsonn (2000) on environmental degradation and conflict, Korf (2004) on the warfare in Sri Lanka and Lautze and Raven Roberts (2006) on humanitarian issues. More recently, economists have also shown increasing attention to processes of

² see: <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/livelihoods-chronic-conflict-working-papers.asp>

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social and economic change at the micro-level of society during conflict. A typical example of this interest is the recent EU founded MICROCON project and the related Households in Conflict Network (HICN), based at the ODI, where the majority of researchers start from a theoretical basis in institutional economics.³

This literature about how people at the micro-level of society attempt to cope in violent environments not only comprises a variety of theoretical approaches, but also covers a lot of different themes such as access to land and other natural resources (Korf 2003, Vlassenroot 2004, Kamungi, Oketch and Huggins 2005), food security (Cohen and Pinstrip-Anderson 1999, Flores, Kwaja and White 2005; Vlassenroot, Ntububa and Raeymaekers 2006) or labour markets and informal economies (Cramer 2006). It would lead us too far to discuss all the different theoretical underpinnings and varieties of issues that are touched upon in this wide literature. Moreover, some of the more specific debates concerning land access and forced migration, urban food security or the informalization of the economy in protracted warfare will be elaborated deeper in the different chapters. Suffice to say therefore at the moment that there exists a wide body of literature about how people attempt to cope throughout situations of protracted warfare, thereby effecting all sorts of societal transformations.

³ see: <http://www.microconflict.eu/> and <http://www.hicn.org/>

1.2. Forced displacement and coping at the household level of society

It is remarkable to note how few of these insights have been picked up by Indonesianists studying communal conflict in Indonesia and very little is known of how ‘ordinary’ people attempted to cope in these insecure and fragile contexts. This is also the case with regards to the violence in Ambon where little attention has been paid to how the eruption of violence in the beginning of 1999 brought about certain social transformations. Nevertheless, due to the high-intensity nature and the relatively long endurance of the violence, it can be expected that the recent conflict had a radical impact on diverse aspects of the Ambonese societal fabric. In contrast to the conflicts in West and Central Kalimantan which only lasted a couple of months, warfare in Ambon lasted for about three years. One reason for this longer endurance is the religious framing of the bloodshed. As I will explain in the next chapter, due to this religious framing, external people and groups in the whole of Indonesia felt related to these more universal identities. This ultimately led to the involvement of new armed groups, which considerably prolonged the violence. Another factor explaining the protracted nature of the conflict in Ambon was the fact that in those areas where none of the parties could chase the other out, violence simply continued. This was definitely the case in Ambon city. As a consequence, this conflict in Ambon lasted for about three years, making it a real protracted conflict and, although occurring in different waves, violence was intense during those three years. It can therefore be expected that this conflict led to some fundamental transformations in the

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livelihoods of broad sections of society. Despite this evident observation, I only came across some Ambonese researchers who looked at the warfare in Ambon from this angle. Examples include the work by Pieter Ongen (s.d.) on petty trade, middlemen and trade networks and the work by Hermien Soselisa (2000) on the disintegration of collective inter-village resource management. This has led to the strange contradiction that despite the communal, intimate nature of the violence which involved many ‘ordinary people’, these ordinary people have been largely neglected in any analysis so far. This not only relates to the motives these ordinary people had to engage in the violence (Purdey 2004), this also concerns the way these ordinary people attempted to cope in this insecure and volatile context.

It was after this reading and interpretation of the literature on communal violence in post-Suharto Indonesia that I paid a first preliminary visit to Ambon in December 2004, without a clearly defined research question. Yet, although my knowledge of the Indonesian language at the time was utterly limited and this hampered any normal, social interaction, one of the first things which struck me were the very visual effects of migration. Simply standing on a hill, overlooking large parts of the island, relocation camps stood out like scars in the landscape. Due to the new, metal roofs of the houses that sharply reflected in the sun and the artificially, built-up nature of these camps, these places contrasted normal, historically established villages. Related to this visual prominence of relocation and IDP (Internally Displaced Person) camps were the stark, spatial religious divisions of the island. This

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was particularly prominent in the city of Ambon where these religious borders ran just next to each other. So this whole issue of forced population movements, and the new fixed religious borders this had created, evoked all sorts of questions, not the least how this had affected existing patterns of socio-economic organization. Moreover, it struck me how little of all this was described in the literature, which strengthened my conviction to further elaborate on this aspect of social change through the angle of forced migration. At the same time, this first visit was particularly overwhelming, not only because of the heavy devastations and the huge military presence, but in particular the immense complexity of everything I heard and saw somewhat scared me. Although I had already gone through most of the literature on the conflict in Ambon, that first visit left me with the feeling I absolutely knew nothing. In those first preliminary conversations, people talked about believing in *adat* as a unifying force, which seemed incompatible with the idea I had about *adat* as customary resource management. Instead of speaking about Christians and Muslims, people started talking about Butonese and Bugis. Islands, villages, political figures were mentioned I had never heard of... So, at all different levels, I felt like an absolute beginner. It was only later that I realized this was an inevitable horde I had to take which is characteristic of all fieldwork in unfamiliar places (Grills 1998: 10-14).

This preliminary visit made two important things clear. First, upon my return to Belgium, I started studying Indonesian through all possible means on a daily basis: courses on CD, children's books and cartoons, asking

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clarifications to a friend who spoke *Bahasa Indonesia*, travelling through Indonesia and trying to talk to people... This was completed by intensive, private language classes in Yogyakarta. Secondly, I agreed that this entry point of forced migration was indeed potentially interesting to better understand response mechanisms of civil populations in protracted warfare and how this brought about processes of social change. Conflict induced migration is a radical breakdown of the traditional way of living and a dynamic process in which access to alternative economic assets needs to be negotiated and places and related identities are re-imagined. In contrast to traditional, ‘old’ approaches which treated forced migrants as passive, voiceless victims or speechless emissaries, numerous studies from the nineties onwards have illustrated how forced migrants are proactive agents being able to make their own decisions (Malkki 1995a, Brun 2001, Refslund Sorenson 2001). Examples include how forced migration recreated social and economic interdependence (Jacobsen 2002), established new forms of identity (Colson 2003), or facilitated processes of emplacement (Holm Pederson 2003). In sum, as Stephen Castles (2004:13) rightly argues, ‘forced migration needs to be analyzed as a social process in which human agency and social networks play a major part’, despite the fact this often deepens underdevelopment.

However, I also had the feeling that in order to overcome the enormous complexity with which I was confronted in my first visit, I needed to start from a straightforward question and a concrete, delineated case study. I then returned to Ambon in the beginning of 2006 until March 2006 to conduct my

first fieldwork. I took the discussions about the start of the conflict largely as a ‘fait accompli’ and did not intend to contribute substantially to these debates. Instead, I focused on the basic question of how people attempted to generate income in one Christian and one Muslim IDP camp, situated in the city of Ambon (see chapter 4). In contrast to my first visit in December 2004, this research went relatively smoothly. Although I still opted to conduct my interviews with a translator, I could understand whole parts of the conversation and directly interact with the people. Moreover, people collaborated in the research with great enthusiasm and openness. This made it a pleasant experience in which I managed to collect a lot of data about the everyday workings of these camps and how the people living in these camps had attempted to cope with the year-long conflict that raged throughout the city.

1.3. Land access, relocation and socio-political control

At the same time, upon my return and attempting to write a coherent article, there were a number of things I became increasingly critical of. The approach I had employed was overtly agency-oriented. Many valuable insights have been gained through this angle. On the other hand, it was obvious that these attempts were constrained due to all sorts of structural factors which were beyond the control of these people. Moreover, the comparison between the two different IDP camps made clear that, despite the fact that these sites were

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only situated a couple of kilometers away from each other, economic opportunities were spatially unevenly distributed. In this sense, I increasingly grew uncomfortable about utterly liberal notions of refugees ‘not recognizing the (new) opportunities available to them’ (Essed et.al 2004: 2), or seeing the poverty and deprivation with which the majority of forced migrants in the world are confronted with as ‘motive forces for innovative change and adaptation’ (Kibreab 2004: 23). This growing discomfort corresponded with some pertinent criticisms that more generally have been formulated of the downscaling of development studies. In too many cases, these micro and agency-oriented perspectives have been reduced to a myth of survival about the perpetual resilience of households in spite of severe structural constraints and tend to leave power relations out of the picture. This holds true for both the case of power relations within the household, as for broader, structural power relations ‘above’ the household, thereby also influencing intra-household dynamics (Agarwal 1997, De Haan and Zomers 2005, Gonzalez de la Rocha 2007). In the methodology I employed in my first field visit, I attempted not seeing the household as a homogeneous unit by accounting for gender differences and how these had changed. Nevertheless, too little attention was paid to power relations above this household level. My first research trip therefore made me realize that more effort needed to be made to contextualize my findings. Although my initial ‘keep it simple and concrete’ approach had helped to come forward with relevant data, I realized that I had artificially closed myself off from the many external complexities which influenced the livelihoods of the people living in these camps. In practical

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terms, this meant that I needed to speak to more people outside these delineated sites. For instance, as illustrated in the second part of chapter 4, through additional fieldwork, I have tried to contextualize some of the findings of my first research trip, by looking into what kind of actors gained control of food distribution in conflict-torn Ambon. I also attempted to contextualize these findings within a broader picture of how the violence affected Ambon economically. This was done by looking for data in statistical yearbooks and some other economic studies. In the meantime, I increasingly wondered how the findings in these camps reflected more general social changes in Ambonese society. The tension between this micro-level approach in a number of delineated camps and looking at how some of these changes reflect broader social transformations has always remained a balancing act during my whole research. For instance, a question that I have particularly focused on, is how far alternative coping mechanisms at the household level of society are illustrative of the upward or downward social mobility of certain ethnic/religious/class based or other groups. This also meant that I needed a better understanding of power relations in Ambonese society and how these were distributed.

Moreover, I sensed that I could no longer reduce displacement to being a byproduct of the conflict. Rather, it became increasingly obvious that displacement stood central to the violence and was potentially an interesting entry point to understanding why people engaged in the violent expulsion of whole communities. A question I struggled with in particular was how

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massive displacement linked up with the story of contested state access after the fall of Suharto, which is considered by many as pivotal to the start of the violence (Bertrand 2002, Goss 2004, Van Klinken 2007). In other words, what were the motives behind the expulsion of tens of thousands of people and did they all relate to the issue of state access? In addition, I increasingly wondered what role natural resources played in explaining the eruption of the conflict and how this was potentially related to forced displacement. This issue of access to natural resources has always figured prominently in multiple discussions on the eruption of conflict. Examples include ideas about resource scarcity (Kaplan 1994, Homer Dixon 1999), the opinion that the dependence upon primary commodity exports increases the likelihood of conflict (Collier 2000), while others elaborate on the spatial distribution of resources (Le Billon 2001). Although these debates figured in discussions on communal violence in a forest rich area such as West Kalimantan (Lee Peluso and Harwell 2001, Lee Peluso 2008, Van Klinken 2008), this was never touched upon with regards to the warfare in Ambon and surrounding islands. Moreover, many authors have illustrated how access to natural resources is not only central to the beginning but also to the sustaining of the conflict. Armed groups establish their own alternative systems of control over natural resources which become important sources of income for these groups. Therefore, the establishment of these so-called war economies considerably prolongs conflict (Kaldor 1999, Reno 1999, Goodhand 2004).

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Simply stated, I felt a need not to just tell a story about forced migration in a delineated IDP or relocation camp, but I intended to tell a story about forced migration in Ambon. In this sense, I adapted the focus of my research in the second visit in the first three months of 2007. This focus has largely been maintained in my subsequent visits in the last three months of 2007 and the summer of 2008. This change in focus also had a practical reason as the IDP camps I worked in, in 2006, were no longer there in 2007. Therefore I decided to start conducting research in four relocation camps scattered all over the island (see map No. 2). Instead of focusing on a broad issue such as income generation, I decided to elaborate on the question of land in these new sites. In all the interviews I conducted, there were three guiding questions I always kept in the back of my mind: (i) why, how and when were these communities forcibly displaced and how is this related to their inability/unwillingness to return to the place they were living before 1999, (ii) what sort of systems are used to access to land in these relocation sites, (iii) how does this affect the livelihoods of the people living in these camps.

This new focus has enabled me to complement many of the deficiencies I came across in my first fieldwork. Land is inextricably linked with questions of authority and control. Having control over access to land means that one has control over the people which are dependent on this land access for their daily livelihood. In many cases, this economic control is converted into political power (Herbst 2000: 173-199, Huggins and Pottier 2005). Moreover, land access is contested, in particular in those regions where land is a scarce

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resource. Based on fieldwork conducted in the sixties, the Dutch scholar Chris van Fraassen, already noted how in particular on the islands of Ambon and Saparua, many people were confronted with limited access to land and therefore were forced to search for jobs outside agriculture (Van Fraassen 1971: 34). This increasing land scarcity was also noted by the legal anthropologist, Franz von Benda Beckmann, when conducting fieldwork in the Ambonese village of Hila in the eighties (Von Benda Beckmann 1990). It is therefore obvious that land access in Ambon has always been a politicized and contested issue, which makes it interesting to see how this interacted with the violence starting in 1999.

Considering the first question of why, when and how these communities became expelled, displacement proved to be a fruitful entry point to study some of the motives to engage in the conflict. Due to the intimate character of the warfare, it has always been difficult to openly touch upon violence. My first efforts to discuss violence were often evaded by pointing to unknown provocateurs, stressing the peaceful nature of the Ambonese people or the opinion that it is no use talking about these issues and everybody should be looking forward and leaving the past behind. Some people simply stated they were fed up with thinking and talking about the conflict. Following Paul Richards (2005: 12) who states that less attention has to be paid on what exactly ‘triggered’ war, but we instead have to focus more on ‘how people make war and peace’, I considered it more fruitful to start asking how violence was conducted through the indirect angle of displacement, rather

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than asking why it was conducted. This why question inevitably promotes 'motive talk' (Prus 1998: 29) in which people feel obliged to justify their behavior to the researcher. Through this how question however, I managed to gather a lot of interesting information as to why violence was conducted against certain sections of society. In particular the observation that many of these displaced communities have been actively protected by some while attacked by others, was central to the insight that localized tensions to access natural resources have too often been neglected by scholars studying the violence in Ambon. These findings form the basis of chapter 3 entitled 'Explaining communal conflict. Agency, private opportunities and 'ordinary folk'. This is the only chapter in which I directly engage in discussions about the eruption and subsequent escalation of violence in Ambon. How this is then related to the inability/unwillingness to return is elaborated in chapter 5 entitled 'I am more indigenous than you are. Recognizing customary tenure in Ambon'. Studying return confirmed, although in a nuanced and complex manner, how the conflict created opportunities for taking over land by more powerful groups in society. Moreover, it was obvious that since the ending of the conflict, attempts are being made to legally confirm some of the population movements as they were brought about by the violence. This whole issue of return also made me aware how access rights to land have a strong ethnic connotation and how ethnicity and religion always have interacted with each other in dynamic and complex ways in Ambon.

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At the same time, despite the new focus of my research, I wanted to hold on to the original objective of studying social change at the micro-level of society. More particular, I have focused on the rather straightforward question of how relocation affected the livelihoods of relocated populations and how this was related to land access. In hindsight, this question was probably too vague considering the diversity found in the relocation sites studied. Nevertheless, two important findings have emerged. As rightly argued by many scholars, insecure access to limited land inevitably intensifies processes of impoverishment and social exclusion, in particular when opportunities for income generation outside agriculture are limited (Borras, Kay and Akhram Lodi, 2005). This is particularly the case in environments characterized by conflict and economic decline (Pons-Vignon and Solignac Lecomte 2004, Taeb 2004), and specifically those who have forcibly migrated tend to be vulnerable to this (Jacobson 2005). This observation could be confirmed through my own research. However, as I will argue in chapter 6 entitled 'Relocation and access to land', it is equally important to note that this has inevitably created profound frustrations. Although everybody lost throughout the conflict, as the popular opinion sometimes goes, some have lost more than others and the people permanently relocated are definitely among those who have lost a lot. This builds further on the findings put forward in chapter 3 and 5 in the sense that the communal conflict invoked opportunities for certain groups to take over land and resources and this has inevitably led to the social exclusion and impoverishment of other groups.

1.4. Methodology

This shift from displacement to relocation thus coincided with a change in methodological approach. All my fieldwork in Ambon has always been ethnographic in nature in a broad sense that I aimed to ‘engage the other and to learn their worlds, their ways of seeing, and their ways of doing and being’ (Grills 1998: 16). I do not intend to go deep into definitional discussions about the meaning of ethnography as ethnography has never been a matter of clearly defined methods, techniques or received procedures but rather a kind of intellectual effort (Geertz 1973: 5-6). A central part of this effort is fieldwork which implies that, at least in a purely spatial sense, attempts are made to get as close as possible to interpret certain social objects, concepts and structures. Like in most other cases of ethnographic research, all the fieldwork I undertook in Ambon has consisted of a traditional mix of observation, participation and interviewing. Under this broad cover however, I went through a fundamental shift from a rather rigid approach consisting of methods aimed at collecting quantitative data to a more flexible and purely qualitative approach. In my first fieldwork in 2006, I used a questionnaire in which I attempted to quantify income generation strategies among displaced communities. As argued by Cerwonka and Malkki (2007:168), quantitative data can perfectly be seen as ‘another form of situated knowledge’, which is therefore not by definition contradictory to the basic underpinnings of ethnographic research. Moreover, these quantitative data were based on own,

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first-hand interviews and were completed with much qualitative findings.⁴ The discomfort after my first fieldwork therefore did not really concern this quantitative approach as such but rather, as I already stated, the limited contextualization of these data. To a certain extent, I had the feeling these data were disconnected. In some way, this was normal considering my still limited insight into broader social transformations in Ambonese society after that first field visit. Moreover, an additional problem I encountered was that gathering representative and solid quantitative data proved extremely time-consuming, in particular when working as an individual researcher with a limited budget. This problem of time was one of the prime reasons why I decided to solely focus on qualitative data in future research.

Second, a much greater reflectivity was applied with regards to my initial research objectives and questions. It is probably the most important characteristic of research which is considered ethnographic that a high level of flexibility/adaptability/improvisation is displayed towards the initial research questions (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 28-32, Cerwonka and Malkki 2007: 197-206). Although I always used the three questions stated above as guiding principles, I integrated many new and interesting observations arising from the fieldwork. Rather than following a straight line, many sideways have been explored which often led me far away from the stipulated trajectory. For instance, although I never directly alluded to these issues, when discussing

⁴ For a more in-depth analysis of this methodology, see chapter 4.

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displacement and return, many people immediately started talking about their emotional bond with the place they were born, how they feel alienated since their expulsion... I quickly realized there was an enormous richness in all these narratives and emotions that could not be left out. A turning point in this regard was the observation that people in one relocation camp openly stated they wished to return home, despite the fact they enjoyed many economic advantages since their relocation. This observation was the starting point of some interesting lines of thought which resulted in chapter 8 'Repairing a broken order. Forced migration, *adat* and a purified present'. This chapter is also an illustration of how reflexivity as a basic attitude for any ethnographer is linked with a broader knowledge of a certain region. It struck me for instance how narratives of return bore many elements of a much broader reconciliation narrative that could be heard in Ambonese society. It is only after a sustained period in the field that these sorts of interesting links and connections can be made. Not coincidentally, it were thus the last months of my field research which proved to be the most interesting. It was also in those last months I increasingly came to realize I was no longer 'recording the story'. The initial approach for my fieldwork was very much driven by a commitment to give voice to the ordinary Ambonese who had lived through this conflict. Almost unconsciously, I thereby attempted to efface myself as a researcher as it was not about 'me' but about 'them'. Although I think and hope that I have always stayed true to this commitment, I realized I was constantly attempting to connect different observations, thereby constructing a personalized interpretation that cannot simply be judged as right or wrong

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(Aunger 2004: 4-14). As already described by Malinovski in 1935 (cited in Cerwonka and Malkki 2007:171): ‘The observer should not function as a mere automaton; a sort of combined camera and phonographic or shorthand recorder of native statements. While making his observations, the fieldworker must constantly construct: he must place isolated data in relation to one another and study the manner in which they integrate’. Inevitably, this implies that on some of the interpretations I make in this dissertation, many people will fundamentally disagree.

There is still another reason to view this dissertation as a personal interpretation rather than mere truth. Conducting fieldwork learns how complex certain social processes can be, and that some questions remain unsolved. In some (limited) cases, certain findings even do not fit in the general picture and contradict an apparently evident and established idea. For instance, much of this dissertation talks about spatial transformations and how religious minorities at a certain point became expelled. Nevertheless, when conducting interviews on the Christian market of Batu Meja in Ambon town, it was all of a sudden mentioned that throughout the conflict, there was one Muslim Butonese family who continued selling there. I double checked this story among other petty traders, and much to my astonishment, this was confirmed. Asking why this family was not chased away, people simply answered that everybody knew that they were good people and never meant harm to anyone. Although I think that this one story does not radically deny my findings about the religious clearings throughout the high-intensity

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violence, this has always served as a warning that there always remain certain complexities which are inevitably overlooked.

In some cases, flexibility and adaptation of my initial research question was unavoidable. For instance, in one relocation site, my approach of land access was quite useless, considering this community was very much focused on income generation in the city of Ambon. Nevertheless, I decided to continue working in this site and switched my focus to access to informal economies. Only towards the end of my research, I understood that the similarities with the other relocation sites were pertinent in a sense that in all four different cases, access to space to perform economic activities stood central. While in this particular case, this space was used to perform activities in the informal economy, in the other three cases, this space was used for farming. Evidently, this flexibility also stood central to the more ‘contextualized’ or ‘embedded’ approach I aimed for. Rather than seeing the relocation sites as ends in themselves, I wanted to use these as entry points which revealed something about social transformations in Ambonese society. Therefore, issues have been studied which are not immediately related to these four case studies. For instance, when I came across interesting insights about access to informal economies in one site, I attempted to broaden this issue for the whole city of Ambon. Therefore, markets and taxi stalls have been studied, even though displaced people are not directly linked to them (see chapter 7: Downward Social Mobility, Prestige and the Informal Economy). Another example is my work among a network of lawyers who were central in the making up of new

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legislations to access land since the end of the conflict (see chapter 5: The Problem of Going Home. Recognizing Customary Tenure in Ambon) and the reconstruction I made about the violent expulsion of the Waai community in chapter 3.

Lastly, a deliberate choice has been made to approach the three questions stated above from a comparative angle. Although any single case definitely has an intrinsic value to study, my trip in 2006 made clear to me that comparative research has some advantages. On the one hand, this potentially increases the generalization of certain findings (Lorenz 1998: 163-197). On the other hand, this potentially puts forward many interesting questions and explanations in an analytical sense.⁵ For instance, in my first research trip in 2006, it became clear that more displaced Christian women became involved in informal petty trade activities, compared to displaced Muslim women. This observation made me search for explanations and ultimately pointed to some remarkable spatial transformations throughout the conflict. I intended to follow this line in my work on relocated communities.⁶ Central to this objective was the fact that all four relocation sites were remarkably different from each other. First of all, a division was made between two Christian (Kayu Tiga and Hila-Tanah Putih) and two Muslim relocation camps (Iha-

⁵ This is also the case with some of the more innovative work on forced migration. See for instance Malkki (1995a) on the comparison between camp refugees and urban refugees in Tanzania.

⁶ These different sites will be discussed more in-depth in the different chapters.

Liang and Kate-Kate). One camp was constituted by an indigenous *adat* law community (Iha-Liang), one ‘in-between’ *adat* law community (Hila-Tanah Putih) and two non-indigenous communities (Kayu Tiga and Kate-Kate). Two relocation camps were in rural areas (Iha-Liang and Hila-Tanah Putih), one in a semi-rural area (Kate-Kate) and one was urban oriented (Kayu Tiga). Just like in the case of my work in the IDP camps, my entry point to these four sites was rather straightforward. I presented myself as a student (*mahasiswa*) from Belgium and asked community leaders (civil and religious) if I was allowed to conduct research on issues of migration and land access in order to write a dissertation.⁷ In all four cases, the answer was positive although the level of cooperation among the four different sites was quite different.

This comparative angle has put forward many interesting hypothesis’ and questions as I was forced to search for an explanation when encountering differences between different sites. In this regard, this had many advantages and I still consider this a good idea. The downside however is that this approach is time-consuming. In total, I spent about 6 to 7 months working on relocation. As I already spent about 3 months in the field in 2006, this means

⁷ In three cases, this access was smoothened as people I knew from a local NGO called *Ekkaleo* were involved in a small education program for children. However, as I conducted most of my research on my own and the activities of *Ekkaleo* were low profile and not outspokenly political, I never had the feeling people felt restrained in talking to me due to this connection.

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that I spent between 9 and 10 months doing field research.⁸ Although I had the feeling this was more than enough after my last field visit in 2008, considering the wide range of issues I cover in this dissertation, this period is in fact quite short. This thesis therefore differs from the more classic anthropological fieldworks consisting of at least 1 year of fieldwork in one and the same site. Moreover, although I visited all these relocation places on a regular basis, I never actually lived in these sites. In this regard, data based on classic participant observation are limited. There are instances in which I followed farmers to their fields, hung out in taxi stands and market places and plucked cloves until my thumb almost fell off, but these sorts of methodologies have not been utilized in a systematic way. Moreover, it is important to note that a substantial part of the information could not be gathered through participant observation as they concerned data on a conflict that by and large was over by the time I conducted the field research. Therefore, the majority of the information has been gathered using a diversity of rather classic interview techniques such as household interviews, individual interviews and focus group discussions. For these reasons, I have always felt hesitant to consider my research as ‘anthropological’ but prefer to see my work, as I already said, as an ethnographic account about social change

⁸ Now and then, these visits have been cut through by short stays in Yogyakarta to extend my visa. In these short stays, I followed additional private lessons in Indonesian language. I also integrated in a network of Ambonese students studying at the UGM (Universitas Gadjah Mada) which provided me with additional information and insights.

throughout and following a communal conflict on the Indonesian island of Ambon, through the angle of forced migration.

1.5. Representation

A final, short word needs to be said about the representation of my data. As the reader of this dissertation will notice, most of the chapters are based on articles which are either published, in press or under review. The prime reason for this is a pragmatic one, due to the pressure being currently put on Ph.D. students to publish in peer reviewed journals before completing their thesis. This publish or perish policy has meant that there is not one big argument being developed throughout the whole thesis. Instead, I have worked out one argument per chapter/article. As a consequence, this dissertation is ill-suited as a potential blueprint for a book. Nevertheless, I have attempted to upgrade the coherence by presenting the chapters and arguments in a chronological order. Chapters 2 and 3 deal with the conflict as such. Chapter 4 concerns displacement throughout the conflict, while Chapter 5 relates to the question of why some communities could not return home once the conflict ended. The remaining chapters then broadly consider the societal consequences of this permanent relocation. I hope that, in this way, I managed to enhance the readability of this dissertation.

II

The events

This chapter aims to give a chronological overview of the events that came to be known in Ambon as the *kerusuhan* (unrest, troubles). As will be demonstrated in chapter 3, different narratives exist about the origins of some of the fighting that occurred. Yet, most people agree that the *kerusuhan* was set in motion on the 19th of January 1999, after a banal fight in the transport terminal of the city of Ambon.¹ Following this scuffle, many slumbering tensions erupted, thereby provoking a quick escalation of the violence over the many different islands the province of Maluku consists of. While it is relatively easy to point to the symbolic beginning of the conflict, it is impossible to define a fixed date for its ending. Rather, this should be understood as a gradual process which is still continuing until today. Also, what is considered as the *kerusuhan* cannot be seen as a period of constant warfare but should be understood as a communal conflict that occurred in different waves at different places. As will be demonstrated below, the town of Ambon witnessed several periods of relative stability. At the same time,

¹ The city of Ambon consists of 258.331 people of which there are 120.489 Muslims, 122.407 Protestants and 15.175 Catholics. The province of Maluku consists of 1.322.908 people of which there are 798.292 Muslims, 425.490 Protestants and 94.180 Catholics, the rest are small minority religions (BPS 2007). The city of Ambon, situated on the island of Ambon, is the capital of the province of Maluku

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full-scale violence could abruptly erupt on the neighboring islands. It therefore makes sense to speak about a period of high-intensity, communal conflict that characterized Ambon and surrounding islands such as Haruku and Saparua from the beginning of 1999 until 2001. From 2001 onwards, large-scale collective violence was gradually being replaced by sporadic acts of violence conducted by radicalized minorities and the number of deaths and the scale of infrastructural destruction decreased considerably. In the beginning of 2002, a peace agreement was signed known as Malino II. This peace agreement not only illustrated the willingness of parts of the political establishment in Jakarta to end the conflict, it also showed how among broad sections of the Ambonese elite, there was a belief that talking to each other was more fruitful than fighting. Previously, similar initiatives often ended up being painful failures. For instance, in September 2000, president Abdurrahman Wahid invited a delegation of Christian and Muslim leaders to Jakarta to discuss possible ways of ending the conflict. As one of the members of the Muslim delegation, Thamrin Ely, recounted, trouble began even before their departure to Jakarta as the Christian and Muslim delegations insisted on taking different planes, both parties preferred staying in different hotels in Jakarta and ultimately, decided they did not wish to talk to each other with each side accusing the other of having ‘provocateurs’ in their delegation. Ultimately the Christian and Muslim delegations went back to Ambon without seeing each other. In contrast, at the beginning of 2002, it seemed as if both parties really understood the importance of talking to each other and coming to a shared, albeit vague, agreement. As the intensity of the

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violence declined, from 2003 onwards, the first few brave souls carefully - yet systematically - started crossing the fixed religious frontlines.² This process came to a halt at the end of April 2004 when renewed fighting between Christians and Muslims erupted in the city centre of Ambon. Luckily, this short but intense outburst of violence only interrupted a slow but steady process of recovery and rapprochement between the two religious communities.

As I explained in the introduction, the research project was primarily focused on aspects of social transformation and displacement due to the communal conflict, rather than the actual fighting. This chapter therefore does not pretend to contribute substantially to what is already known about the course of the violence in Ambon, although new data have been added to existing literature on the subject. First of all, I conducted a thorough study of Ambonese newspapers for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001 which provided me with new insights and data about the progress of the conflict.³ Furthermore,

² Until the last period of fieldwork in the summer of 2008, many people still expressed a deep unease of going to certain places on Ambon. For many Christians, the Muslim dominated Leihitu part of the island was still perceived as an unsafe, no-go area. This was particularly the case for the dreaded village of Hitu, considered to be the home of fierce and radicalized Muslim fighters. Many Muslims living in Ambon city have never visited again the Christian neighborhood of Kudamati since the start of the conflict.

³ These newspaper articles have been consulted in the Moluks Historisch Museum, Utrecht. The majority of these newspapers have not yet been properly classified. An interesting document is a day to day collection of Ambonese newspaper articles (Christian and Muslim) that have been compiled by the Ambonese minister A.F.

the personal, slightly biased, but nonetheless interesting daily notes and observations from the Dutch priest and teacher C.J. Böhm who lived in the city of Ambon throughout the violence have been scrutinized.⁴ Last but not least, many people have shared their personal experiences, emotions and opinions about what happened throughout this period. Some of this has been integrated in this chapter.

2.1. Violence in post-Suharto Indonesia

When the Suharto led authoritarian New Order imploded in May 1998 in the midst of a grave financial and economic crisis, it looked as if the Indonesian archipelago became engulfed in a wave of violence. Serious anti-Chinese riots broke out in the capital of Jakarta and Christian-Muslim riots erupted in diverse places such as Ambon, capital of the province of Maluku (January 1999), North Maluku (August 1999) and the city of Poso in the province of Central Sulawesi (December 1998). Inter-ethnic riots between Dayaks and Madurese started in Central Kalimantan (February 2001) while Malay versus Madurese violence erupted in West Kalimantan (February 1999). In the

Manupessy. This document runs from January 1999 until August 2001 and consists of 10 volumes totaling more than 2000 pages.

⁴ The majority of these documents entitled 'The situation in Ambon/Moluccas' can be retrieved from the website www.malra.org/posko , later additions have been given to me by C.J. Böhm himself. The whole document runs from June 22, 2000 until May 29, 2006.

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meanwhile, existing separatist conflicts in Aceh and East Timor intensified. On top of this, the terrorist attacks of the Jemaah Islamiyah in Bali in October 2002 and some minor bombings afterwards put Indonesia at the frontline of the US led war on terrorism. Despite the huge media coverage of the events in East Timor and the attacks conducted by the Jemaah Islamiyah, the violence between Christians and Muslims in the province of Maluku stood out as one of the most bitter, intense and prolonged conflicts in post-New Order Indonesia. Within this province, the city and the island of Ambon and some of the closest surrounding islands in particular were affected by a high-intensity conflict which lasted from 1999 until 2001, but even as late as April 2004, there were profound outburst of violence leading to dozens of deaths. Due to its longevity, it is fair to characterize the violence in Ambon as a protracted communal conflict. Moreover, the number of direct killings arising from the violence was high compared with those in other regions in Indonesia. Conservative estimates put this number at 2,023 (Varshney et al 2004: 39) in the province of Maluku for the period between 1990 and 2003.⁵ Evidently, the large majority of these killings occurred during the high-intensity period of the conflict that started in early 1999. Because this assessment by Varshney et al (2004) is grounded on recorded deaths in newspapers, it is likely that the real number of direct killings was considerably higher. The International Crisis Group (ICG, 2002) estimates for example that by 2002, the number of

⁵ As a comparison, the devastating terrorist attack of the Jemaah Islamiyah in Bali cost the life of 202 people.

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deaths due to the violence in the provinces of both Maluku and North Maluku had reached between 5,000 and 10,000. Even more revealing is the relative share of violent religious incidents. Out of 14 Indonesian provinces that have been researched by Varshney et al (2004), the province of Maluku alone accounts for 73.4% of religious incidents resulting in direct deaths. The lion's share of these killings in Maluku occurred in and around Ambon.

2.2. Riots, escalation and endemic conflict in Ambon

Contradictory narratives circulate about what happened that famous January 19, 1999. Yet, everybody agrees that a Christian public transport driver and some Muslim youths became engaged in a fight in the transport terminal in the inner city centre of Ambon (HRW 1999). This fight quickly turned into major rioting between Christians and Muslims. Towards the end of the day, in multiple neighborhoods in Ambon town, Christians and Muslims clashed with each other, thereby causing heavy infrastructural damage. These riots continued throughout the whole night and very quickly, the first deaths and injuries were reported (HRW 1999). The next day, the violence had already spread to more rural regions. The Christian village of Benteng Karang was attacked by residents coming from Hitu, Mamala and some other villages from the Leihitu peninsula of the island. They marched to Ambon after (false) rumors had spread that the Al Fatah mosque in the city centre of Ambon was on fire. The attack caused the death of about 15 Christians (HRW 1999:16). In

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addition, the minority Christian community living between the border of Hila and Kaitetu was chased away but no deaths or injuries occurred there. Yet, 6 people were killed in Hila who were staying at a bible camp organized by the New Covenant Church of Christ (*Gereja Kristus Perjanjian Baru, GKPB*) (HRW 1999: 18). In the next few days, violence spread to different locations on Ambon island. By early February 1999, different villages on the neighbouring islands of Seram, Haruku and Saparua were affected by heavy violence. Large-scale expulsions of Muslim Butonese settlements took place, in particular on the Christian dominated Leitimur part of Ambon island. One example is the different Butonese settlements in the Christian village of Eerie. In addition, many market stalls and tricycle taxis - often belonging to Muslim Butonese in majority Christians neighborhoods in Ambon town such as Kudamati - were destroyed and/or taken over. Many of these Butonese left the province of Maluku once and for all. By the beginning of March 1999, after the first intensive round of rioting, a conservative estimate putted the death toll at around 160 (HRW 1999:2).

Already from the very early days, one should be careful describing the violence in Ambon by terms such as ‘spontaneous outbursts’ or ‘uncoordinated attacks’. Very quickly, coordination centers were established in different places which mobilized people - in particular male youth - to attack or defend certain neighborhoods (Van Klinken 2007: 99-100). The most important coordination centre for the Christians was the big Maranatha church, situated next to the governor’s office in the city centre of Ambon. For

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Muslims, the Al Fatah mosque was a gathering point for Muslim fighters but also served as a hospital for the wounded (including civilians) and a temporary refuge to the many Muslim IDPs.⁶ The Maranatha church and the Al Fatah mosque are a 10 to 15 minute walking distance from each other. The mobile units that were mobilized by these centers came to be known in Ambon as the *akar rumput* (grassroots).⁷

Although it is easy to interpret events in hindsight, many Ambonese explained to me that the eruption of the inter-religious violence in the beginning of 1999 was no real surprise to them. Different people used the image of a '*bom waktu*' (time bomb) to refer to the events of those first weeks. Already during the preceding weeks, there were apparent occurrences of fights with a strong inter-religious rationale. This sense that something was 'in the air' can also be derived from placards that appeared at the end of 1998 in Ambon promoting inter-religious harmony. These placards were placed throughout Ambon by a couple of NGOs following the church burnings in the Ketapang district in Jakarta and the violent reactions this provoked in the city of Kupang, West

⁶ As far as mid 2006, hundreds of Muslim IDPs kept residing adjacent to the Al Fatah mosque in the camp of THR. (see chapter 4)

⁷ The young Christian fighters were referred to as *agas* after a small mosquito with a nasty bite. *Agas* also stands for *Anak Gereja Allah Sayang* (Child Church God Love). Schulze (2002: 64) estimates that over the two to three years of violence, there existed about 25 Christian militia groups consisting of about 100 to 200 members operating all over the island of Ambon. About 60% of these militia fighters consisted of youth between 12 and 25 years old. The Ambonese Muslim fighters were known as *linggis* (crowbar).

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Timor on November 30, 1998. At the end of 1998, at ecumenical meetings in the Maranatha Church in Ambon city, measures were openly discussed in case unrest would break out (The situation in Ambon/Moluccas, Report No. 41, August 20, 2000). Yet, despite the anticipation of unrest, everyone spoken to confessed that they never expected events would run out of hand the way they did. Both the intensity and the enduring nature of the conflict took everybody by surprise. At first, it also appeared that the violence could be contained relatively quickly. At the beginning of March, things appeared to return to normal and civil servants started returning to their work (Suara Pembaruan, March 3, 1999; Kompas, March 19, 1999). Governor Saleh Latuconsina even officially declared that it was safe enough for all IDPs to return home and start rebuilding their lives (Suara Maluku, March 13, 1999). This lull in the fighting came to define the first phase of the conflict (Tanamal and Trijono 2004: 238-239).

Although no longer resulting in massive bloodletting, tensions remained strained in and around Ambon.⁸ As would happen regularly in the coming months, sporadic confrontations took place in the borderland between Christian Mardika and Muslim Batu Merah. The area around Diponegoro street also remained vulnerable to violence between Christians and Muslims (Suara Maluku, July 19, 1999). This period of relative calm came to a halt

⁸ This was also the case in the town of Tual on the far-away Kei islands in Southeast Maluku where inter-religious violence erupted in April 1999. The violence on the Kei island could relatively easy and quickly be contained (Thornburn 2002).

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when renewed high-intensity violence erupted from the 23th until the 25th of July in Poka, at the opposite end of the bay from where Ambon city is situated (see map No. 1). These events in Poka were the start of what came to be known as the second round of riots in Ambon which lasted until late 1999/early 2000 (Van Klinken 2001:4). Throughout August and September, the town and the island of Ambon were plagued by major riots such as the ones in Hative Kecil at the end of August. In the beginning of October, heavy fighting broke out in the neighborhoods of Batu Merah, Benteng and Air Salobar. The region of Seram Barat (Western Seram) also became affected by inter-religious violence resulting in dozens dead (Suara Maluku, December 6, 1999). Towards the end of 1999, it looked as if Ambon and the surrounding island were descending into total chaos with some of the worst clashes ever taking place. The start of this intensive round of rioting was the burning of the Silo church in the city of Ambon on the 26th of December 1999. The following day, the An Nur mosque was totally destroyed. Three days after the burning of the Silo Church, 58 deaths were reported in the city of Ambon alone and hundreds more wounded (Suara Pembaruan, December 29 1999). Ambonese newspapers referred to this period as '*natal berdarah*' (bloody Christmas), in other cases, the image of a '*lautan api*' or 'fire sea' was used to describe the city of Ambon (Suara Maluku, December 28, 1999). On New Year's Eve, a curfew was declared in the city during which people were forbidden to go out between 10pm until 6 am in the morning. Other islands also witnessed some of the worst violence around this period. On New Year's Eve, there was intense fighting in different villages on the island of Haruku

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and the town of Masohi on the island of Seram witnessed very serious inter-religious rioting in the beginning of 2000. The Christian newspaper Suara Maluku speaks of 64 deaths due to these riots in the town of Masohi alone (Suara Maluku, January 3, 2000). Despite these ferocities, from the middle of January onwards, the first reports of a *kondisi tenang* (cooling condition) can be retrieved. This relative stability was firstly evident in Ambon town. In many rural regions, violence still erupted frequently. For instance, regular border skirmishes took place between Muslim Hitu and Christian Wakal in the second half of January. In February and March 2000, violence erupted between Christians and Muslims on the island of Buru. Nevertheless, from March 2000 onwards, communal tensions started easing in most places in the province of Maluku.

2.3. The importance of religious framing

In the meantime, the devastating fighting in Maluku had touched a sensitive chord in the rest of Indonesia. Already in the first weeks following the outbreak of violence in Ambon, demonstrations were staged in many Indonesian cities such as Jakarta, Semarang and Pekanbaru (Bertrand 2004: 127). Yet, as the number of killings rose to unprecedented levels towards the end of 1999, voices for concrete engagement in the Moluccas rose considerably, in particular among radical and conservative Islamic groupings. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the period of the *natal berdarah* in

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Ambon coincided with massive killings in the province of North Maluku. The conflict in North Maluku was already simmering from August 1999 onwards but erupted full-scale from November 1999 until early 2000. In particular the events on December 27th in which Protestants killed more than 400 defenseless Muslim civilians in one night was a sad pinnacle (ICG 2002). This event boosted the impression among many Muslims in the rest of Indonesia that Islam was threatened in the Moluccas and needed protection the state could not guarantee (Davis 2002: 15-16). This served as a multiplier for the involvement of new armed militias. This religious framing of the conflict is central to understanding the dramatic and unforeseen escalation of the violence. In Ambon, people translated their everyday experiences into broader frameworks they knew from other places in the world. Typical examples are identifications with the conflict in the Middle East. For instance, the following pictures were taken in deserted houses of Christians in the area of Poka/Rumah Tiga. Similar sorts of graffiti can still be retrieved in many Muslim places depicting militant organizations such as Hizbullah or references to the Intafada.

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Graffiti on deserted Christian houses in Poka/Rumah Tiga, November 2007



Apart from Ambonese translating localized events into external frameworks, external actors also related to the localized events in Ambon. The religious rationale behind the communal violence in Ambon was followed with great attention as many Muslims and Christians in the rest of Indonesia felt concerned or even sympathetic with their religious brethren (Sidel 2006: 182-

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184). This religious affinity made it possible for certain entrepreneurs to mobilize new actors towards violence. This happened both inside and outside Ambon. On the island of Lombok, the events in Maluku became a symbolic point of reference through which anti-Christian riots were instigated (Avonius 2004). In the meantime, new patterns of mobilization emerged through which non-Moluccan actors would become involved in the Ambonese communal violence, thereby giving local conflict a new national and even international dimension (Sidel 2006: 196-197).

The most prominent among these armed militias was the Laskar Jihad (the Jihad Paramilitary Force) which arrived in the town of Ambon around April/May 2000, gracefully cheered by large crowds of Ambonese Muslims (Noorhaidi 2006: 204).⁹ The Laskar Jihad was set up in the beginning of January 2000 as the paramilitary division of the Salafist Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jama'ah (FKAWJ, Communication Forum for the Congregation of the Followers of the Prophet). In turn, the FKAWJ was established in February 1998 in Solo, Java (Hasan 2002: 146-147, 154). On April 6, 2000, the enigmatic leader of the Laskar Jihad, Ja'afar Umar Thalib, made an open plea in the Senayan stadium in Jakarta to interfere in the Moluccas. A couple of weeks later, the first Laskar Jihad fighters set sail for Ambon. It is estimated that at its peak, there were about 3000 Laskar Jihad

⁹ I do not intend to give a broad overview about the ideological origins of this Laskar Jihad as this falls outside the scope of the research. For an elaborate account, see in particular the outstanding work by Noorhaidi Hasan (2002, 2005)

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members operating in Ambon. Only a minority of this group was engaged in real active fighting. The majority was involved in social services such as teaching and nursing. Even after the arrival of the Laskar Jihad, the big majority within the Muslim militias still consisted of Ambonese Muslims (Noorhaidi 2006: 207). Apart from the Laskar Jihad, some other minor Muslim paramilitary groups such as the Front Pembela Islam Maluku (Front of the Defenders of Islam in the Moluccas) and the Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia (the Indonesian Holy Warrior Paramilitary Force) also left for Ambon (Hasan 2002: 148-150). These militias were far outnumbered by the Laskar Jihad and only played a marginal role.

The importance of this religious framing also becomes clear if we look at the role played by the different security forces. This role cannot be understood without making reference to the general Muslim versus Christian divide (ICG 2002). Although the army versus police tensions that characterized the conflict in Ambon were also influenced by national competition (Azca 2003), one can generally state that the local police forces and the *Brimob* (Brigade Mobil) took sides with the Christians. Different sections within the TNI (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, National Army of Indonesia) took sides with the Muslims. This siding was largely based on religious affiliation. The majority of the army forces came from outside of Maluku and were generally Muslim. The local police forces consisted of 70% Christians (ICG 2002: 4), the Brimob counted 75% Christians amongst their rank (Bertrand 2004: 131). This stands in sharp contrast to the observations made by Lee Peluso (2001)

about the anti-Madurese riots in early 1999 in West Kalimantan. Just like in Ambon, a total mismanagement of the security situation by the armed forces was noted. In West Kalimantan however, there was hardly any alignment of the armed forces with the warring parties. The military represented the Indonesian state and the Indonesian state was not a direct target of the armed groups. Moreover, these military were considered to be external, neutral and having little affinity with the localized battles that were framed through an ethnic lens.

2.4. The coming of the Laskar Jihad

The arrival of the Laskar Jihad led to a new escalation of the conflict and invigorated the military power of the Muslims. Before May 2000, the Muslim side was predominantly on the defensive, in particular in the city centre of Ambon where they were pushed into a small strip near the harbour. This changed after the arrival of the Laskar Jihad who did not just bring fresh fighters, superior arms and logistical support (ICG 2000; Goss 2004) but also fuelled the spirit of many Ambonese Muslims (Noorhaidi 2006: 205). Shortly upon the arrival of the first Laskar Jihad troops, some daring, simultaneous attacks were launched on the 17th of May at different strategic points in the city centre of Ambon (Suara Maluku, May 19, 2000). Around the same time, the Brimob headquarters in Tantai were attacked through which additional professional weaponry was obtained. Due to the fear that the Laskar Jihad

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would take hold of the whole city, all foreign staff from international NGOs such as the Belgian MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières, Doctors Without Borders) and the French ACF (Action Contre la Faim, Action Against Hunger) were evacuated. In the succeeding weeks, agonizing fear gripped the Christian Ambonese population. It is also around this period that the Catholic priest C.J. Böhm started his series of almost daily reports in an attempt to let the outside world know what is happening in Ambon. The first report which appeared on June 22th, 2000 is illuminating in this regard: 'The town of Ambon is more and more being surrounded by the Jihad Troops, who in this way will prevent any Christian to escape the great-scale slaughter they have in mind and is apt to be launched any moment now'. Further on, he states: 'The Christians are trying to defend themselves to their last drop of blood, but are outnumbered and do not have adequate weapons. They are ready to die, but not without the world to know what has been done to them'. The report is then concluded by an urgent plea to the United Nations Security Council to intervene in the Moluccas. Although the Christians held their positions in Ambon town, some considerable defeats were suffered in other parts of the region. In May 2000, the arrival of Laskar Jihad troops on the island of Buru led to large expulsions of Christian communities who mainly fled to the island of Ambon. Beginning the 10th of June, things started to go awry in the villages of Poka/Rumah Tiga and Hative Kecil with major fights between Christians and Muslims lasting for several days and resulting in dozens of deaths.

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Due to the seriousness of the situation, a civil emergency (*darurat sipil-militer*) was proclaimed on June 23 in which the military gained extra legal powers to intervene in case of new emergencies. Foreigners were officially prohibited to enter the province (Kompas, June 24, 2000).¹⁰ A new curfew was declared on the 27th of June. The results of these measures were limited. The town of Ambon remained paralyzed by open warfare on the borders between the Christian and Muslim neighborhoods throughout the month of July. Christians and Muslims kept leaving the city of Ambon, to as far as Irian Jaya in Indonesian Papua. On the 3rd and 4th of July, a renewed attack was launched in Poka/Rumah Tiga which led to the expulsion of all remaining Christians and the total destruction of the *Universitas Pattimura* (Pattimura University), an institution that had always been considered an important stronghold of Christian elitism. In the meantime, the Christian village of Waai came under fierce attack, ultimately resulting in its total destruction at the beginning of August 2000. The fall of Waai and the destruction of the Pattimura University were important symbolic markers illustrating renewed Muslim power resulting from the entrance of the Laskar Jihad, thereby fuelling the panic among many Christians that total defeat was imminent. This was also stated by Laskar Jihad leader, Ja'afar Umar Thalib, in an interview with the Siwalima newspaper (Siwalima August 7, 2000). In the interview, Umar Thalib reveals that it is his expectation that the conflict will be finished

¹⁰ This civil emergency would remain intact as far as September 2003 (Goss, 2004).

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soon. This would be accomplished by defeating the last three Christian strongholds of Kudamati, Passo and Gudang Arang.

This prediction never came true, although battles resulting in vast numbers of deaths and wounded continued. In the city of Ambon, the border zone between Christian *Mardika* and Muslim *Batu Merah* remained insecure. In September, heavy fighting started on the island of Saparua (Gatra, September 16, 2000). A coalition of different Christian villages attacked the small Muslim enclave of Iha. After enduring attacks on this village, people were literally forced into the sea and many could only reach safety by swimming to a nearby navy vessel. In this final attack, 18 people from Iha were killed. Iha was the only village 'lost' by the Muslims since the arrival of the *Laskar Jihad*. As Christian fighters were gathering to wipe Iha out, some other Christian villages on the island of Saparua such as *Sirisori Kristen* and *Pia* were left behind undefended and came under heavy attack (Siwalima, September 25, 2000). Fighting in and around *Sirisori Kristen* would continue to the end of October. Other hotbeds where conflict broke out were the villages of *Hative Besar* and *Suli* (Suara Maluku, September 27, 2000). As late as November, the Christian village of *Suli* was engulfed by heavy violence in which one *Brimob* member was also killed (Siwalima, October 11, 2000). Similarly in the Christian village of *Hative Kecil*, conflict erupted once again (Suara Maluku, October 13, 2000). In this last assault on *Hative Kecil*, the attackers were confronted by heavy retaliation from the security forces, causing more deaths among the attackers than among the people of *Hative*

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Kecil. Three military personnel were also killed in this clash. Due to this continuing stream of attacks, large parts of the Ambonese Christian population persistently kept asking for outside intervention. Demonstrations were staged in Ambon town in which at different times, thousands of Christians participated (Siwalima, 28 September 2000).

2.5. Regaining control

From December 2000 onwards, open warfare as witnessed in the villages of Waai, Iha or Suli started to decrease. At the same time, reports in the Ambonese press about sweeps conducted by the security forces with the aim of confiscating weapons owned by civilian and/or civilian militias, started to appear more regularly. Interventions were also undertaken to eliminate sniper hangouts in the town of Ambon. Although these actions had already started in late October, from December onwards, their scale and intensity increased dramatically. This turning point in the conflict during which serious and persistent attempts were made by the security forces to regain control had started some time earlier. On 26 June 2000, Colonel I Made Yasa was appointed as the new military chief commander of the Pattimura Military Command in Ambon. It was hoped that the Hindu religious background of I Made Yasa could transcend the Christian versus Muslim divide. In addition, a special unit called the *Yon Gab* (*Battalyon Gabungan* or Joint Battalion) was established, destined to be deployed in special emergencies (ICG 2002: 11).

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This Yon Gab unit was composed of three different military divisions: the navy, the army and the special forces *Kopassus* (*Korps Pasukan Khas, Special Force Corps*). Operations by Yon Gab in Ambon started on August 9, 2000. Another important factor foreshadowing the turning point in the conflict was the interest foreign governments started to take in the Moluccas. In particular the visible involvement of the Laskar Jihad increasingly started to worry some foreign governments. Throughout the second half of 2000, a delegation of the European Union, ambassadors from Germany, Japan, Portugal, the Netherlands, Belgium and France, a general consul of the USA, the vice ambassador from Australia and a delegate of the Vatican all paid a visit to Ambon to discuss different issues with the military command, political and religious leaders and civil society activists.

In the first months following his appointment, Colonel I Made Yasa still faced many difficulties and open warfare continued. Yet, from December 2000 onwards, the efforts gradually started to pay off. One of the first measures undertaken was the arrest of army and police personnel who were aligned with the warring parties. Another linchpin of the policy by I Made Yasa was the disarmament of armed civil groups.¹¹ These actions often provoked

¹¹ These actions also revealed how many weapons sometimes had infiltrated society in the two years of the conflict. For instance, in the far away village of Hatuallang on West Seram, 622 'bom rakitan' (self-made bomb) were confiscated (Suara Maluku, 29 Januari 2001). In many cases, thousands of bullets were confiscated.

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renewed fighting between armed militias and the security forces.¹² The clashes between sections of the Laskar Jihad and the Yon Gab in particular sometimes turned violent. This gave the Yon Gab the label of being pro-Christian and anti-Muslim. One of the most dramatic examples was the siege of the Wijaya II hotel between January 20 and 21, 2001, situated at the volatile border zone between Batu Merah and Mardika. After snipers were signaled there, the hotel was attacked. Since the Muslim militiamen in the hotel did not intend to surrender, the situation ran dramatically out of hand. Ultimately, the attack on the hotel lasted for about 24 hours, until the navy was asked to intervene. The siege led to the death of at least nine civilians and one Brimob soldier (ICG 2002: 12).¹³ Remarkably, there were also 14 police officers and 1 army officer hiding in the hotel. Although it was never proven that these officers were aligned with armed militias, their arrest gave rise to all sorts of theories and rumors, not the least in Ambonese newspapers where their heavily beaten up faces featured prominently. Another dramatic confrontation took place on June 24, 2001 when Yon Gab attacked the Medical Clinic of the Laskar Jihad, causing the death of 24 Laskar Jihad

¹² The confiscations of weapons could also stir high emotions in Ambon in which the Christians as well as the Muslims accused the Yon Gab of partiality, depending where the action was undertaken. For instance, after weapons were confiscated in the Muslim village of Waimital on West Seram, a demonstration was staged in Ambon city in which Molotov cocktails were thrown at the governor's office by angry civilians (Siwa Lima, December 2, 2000).

¹³ The many reports about this event in Ambonese newspapers provided differing numbers of people killed and wounded. All these estimates were considerably higher than the data given by the ICG.

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members and wounding 34 (Noorhaidi 2006: 216). Subsequent to this attack, the role of the Laskar Jihad in Ambon was largely diminished. Moreover, the grip of the Indonesian government on the Laskar Jihad tightened after the 09/11 terrorist attacks in the USA (Schulze 2002: 61). The Laskar Jihad was officially disbanded on October 12, 2002, five days after the devastating Bali bombings.

Adding to the increased efforts to regain control over the situation in the Moluccas, was the arrest of some major protagonists in the first half of 2001. On the 5th of May 2001, Ja'afar Umar Thalib was arrested at the airport of Surabaya and put under house arrest (ICG 2002: 15-16). The arrest of Thalib was somewhat balanced by the arrest of FKM (*Front Kedalautan Maluku, Front for the Sovereignty of the Moluccas*) leader Alex Manuputty some days before, on the 25th of April, 2001. This FKM made its existence public on the 18th of December, 2000, but had already been established some time earlier on the 15th of July, 2000. The FKM characterized itself as a 'moral organization' seeking autonomy for Maluku, thereby invoking strong memories of the separatist RMS (*Republic Maluku Selatan, Republic of the South Moluccas*) rebellion of 1950. This existence of the FKM proved useful for the Laskar Jihad to further legitimate their struggle as defenders of the unity of Indonesia versus the assumed separatist tendencies of the Ambonese Christians (Davis 2002: 17, Schulze 2002: 61, Turner 2003). Overall, the influence of the FKM on the conflict in Ambon has been marginal despite the fact they became a symbolic rallying point, in particular for the Muslim side of the population.

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Around the same period, on March 20, 2001, a prominent leader of the Christian militias, Agus Wattimena was shot dead under murky circumstances. The reasons behind his death are still widely speculated on.¹⁴ Yet, regardless of the circumstances and plausible motives, Wattimena's role, who still enjoys prestige among sections of the Christian population in Ambon, was played out.

Although some pertinent criticisms can be made regarding the sometimes crude performance of the Yon Gab (ICG 2002), and some other sections of the security forces, large-scale communal violence subsumed substantially from December 2000 onwards.¹⁵ Despite the fact that communal relations remained tense and conflict could be stirred up easily, large-scale, collective violence involving large crowds of people resulting in open warfare became rare and was replaced by violence of a more hidden nature.¹⁶ Typical

¹⁴ Among many Ambonese, there exists a deep held conviction that Agus Wattimena knew too much about close collaborations between the Kopassus special forces and Christian militias and was therefore shot dead by these same Kopassus units. Other rumors have it that he was shot by his wife for adultery.

¹⁵ Due to these criticisms, the Yon Gab was replaced in November 2001 by a Kopassus unit. Already in June 2001, I Made Yasa was transferred to a new position.

¹⁶ A remarkable exception in which far-fetched rumors could still provoke major upheaval was the visit of the Dutch ambassador to Ambon on the 19th of May 2001. In the days preceding his visit, rumor spread that a big RMS conspiracy was being set up in the Netherlands and the visit of the ambassador should be understood against this background (Timmer 2002:74-77). When the ambassador finally arrived, violence broke out in multiple places in Ambon town, resulting in at least 9 deaths on the

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examples are shoot-outs or bomb attacks on speedboats in and around the bay of Ambon throughout 2001 and 2002. As the majority of the people did not yet dare to cross the borders separating the Muslim and Christian areas on the island by land, people travelled by sea to reach family, friends or places such as the airport. As these boats often had to pass through the narrow bay of Ambon, these were shot at regularly by snipers. Other examples are hidden bomb attacks on public transport facilities such as minibuses.

The efforts to end the hostilities in Ambon ultimately culminated in the Malino II agreement. After the Malino I agreement was signed to end the communal conflict in Poso in November 2001, 70 delegates from Maluku met in the town of Malino to conclude the Malino II agreement on the 13th of February, 2002. The most important initiators were Yusuf Kalla, Minister for People's Welfare and Susilo Bambang Yudoyono, also known as SBY, Minister for Political and Security Affairs.¹⁷ The agreement consists of 11 articles and essentially states that both parties agree to end hostilities and aim to uphold the rule of law.¹⁸ Albeit vague, the Malino II agreement seems to have injected a sense of optimism and hope among many Ambonese. For

Christian side (*Suara Maluku*, 22 May 2001). As a result, the ambassador had to be evacuated from his hotel by the military and had to abruptly end his visit.

¹⁷ In 2004, SBY and Yusuf Kalla were respectively elected as president and vice-president of Indonesia.

¹⁸ Probably the most striking and concrete item within the whole declaration is clause stating that the system of recruitment for the Pattimura University has to be open and impartial.

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instance, at the end of February 2002, the priest C.J. Böhm, describes a remarkable observation he made in the city of Ambon. In his notes, he writes: 'Several thousands of young men - both Muslim and Christian - from the nearby island of Haruku, specifically from the five villages that together constitute the Hatuhala area, came to Ambon yesterday in perfect accordance. Their large crowd went loudly singing songs of unity (*Satu Nusa Satu Bangsa*) through the city of Ambon, disregarding any borders that separate Christian from Muslim areas. Policemen and military joined them. Even the Police Chief Commander joyfully walked arm in arm with them' (The situation in Ambon/Moluccas, Report No. 243, February 28th, 2002). Although this observation might be slightly exaggerated, it illustrates a sense of optimism and renewed confidence that the communal conflict in Ambon was definitely over.

I do not intend to mention every single bomb blast or shoot out that occurred in Ambon as far as 2006. Suffice to say that the overall situation was increasingly improving and that from late 2003 onwards, the first people started to enter each other's area. This evolution was shortly but abruptly put a halt at the end of April 2004 when suddenly, the city of Ambon descended once again into high-intensity violence.¹⁹ These riots started on the 25th of April, 2004 when FKM supporters commemorated the 54th anniversary of the RMS rebellion in the Christian neighborhood of Kudamati. After the raising

¹⁹ The following is largely based on ICG (2004)

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of an RMS flag, the participants who attended the commemoration were arrested. Going to and coming from the police station, the arrestees were obliged to pass through Muslim neighborhoods, thereby giving the impression that an RMS rally was going on. This caused outrage among parts of the Muslim population. Ultimately, upon their return from the police station, these FKM supporters became involved in a fight with Muslim youth. Quickly, some offices of international NGOs such as MSF, a UN office and - important for the following chapters - the whole land registration office (*kadaster*) were burned down. By May 5th, the riots were largely contained, yet at a cost of 38 deaths. The suddenness and unexpectedness of the events and the involvement of professional snipers made many people in Ambon conclude that outside provocateurs were behind the violence and that it was closely related to the upcoming presidential elections. Although these events in late April 2004 will probably always remain shrouded in secrecy, the most important factor is that these riots only were an interruption in a gradual process of recovery and Ambon did not descend once again into long-term communal violence.

III

Explaining communal conflict.

Agency, private opportunities and ordinary folk¹

After providing a chronological overview of the events that are known as the *kerusuhan*, this chapter aims to elaborate on the explanations why this conflict erupted. More in particular, it will be stated how many explanations about the recent communal warfare in Ambon tend to downplay the role of Ambonese ‘ordinary folk’ in the conflict, by emphasizing the manipulative role played by elites. In the so-called provocateur theory, which is still popular among broad sections of Ambonese society today, Jakarta-based military elites are held responsible for instigating the violence. Apart from the fact that conclusive evidence for this hypothesis is still lacking, violence is inaccurately downplayed as a defensive reaction to the aggressive provocation of a distant, almost ghostly, actor. More elaborate accounts of the eruption of communal conflict between Christians and Muslims in Ambon point to religiously framed struggles to access a patrimonial state and the emergence of specific threats and opportunities for regional elites after the fall of Suharto in May 1998. Whilst this thesis will be upheld, it does not wholly account for why so

¹ This outline of this chapter is based on the article ‘How ordinary folk became involved in the Ambonese conflict. Understanding private opportunities during communal violence’, *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia and Oceania* (accepted)

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many people with little chance of ever accessing the state bureaucracy became involved in this communal conflict. In order to better grasp the incentives of engaging in communal violence in Ambon, this chapter posits the explanation that people had exceptional opportunities to take over land when the first Christian-Muslim riots broke out in the town of Ambon. This was particularly the case in those instances where institutional arrangements to access land were already being contested before 1999. These private opportunities stood apart from the reasons which instigated the initial riots in the town of Ambon but became a rationale throughout the conflict. In this regard, displacement cannot be understood as an unforeseen byproduct of the violence. Rather, effecting displacement served as one of the foremost reasons to conduct violence against the religious other, or as John Sidel correctly points out: ‘... it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the violence served a means of effecting displacement, rather than displacement coming as a by-product of the violence’ (Sidel 2008: 47).

3.1. About provocateurs and bandana’s

Amongst broad sections of Ambonese society, there exists a strong belief that Jakarta is responsible for inciting the Ambonese into civil warfare. The most widely spread variant of this theory is the idea that the military circles close to former president Suharto provoked the violence in order to create uproar and chaos in the country. This would then be seized as an opportunity to facilitate

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the return of Suharto and restore the New Order as the ultimate solution to end these conflicts. Another variant of this provocation theory circulating in Ambon is the belief that the current president Susilo Bambang Yudhono and then vice-president Yusuf Kalla secretly instigated the violence. The conflict in Ambon (and Poso) offered them an exceptional opportunity to present themselves as determined peace builders and the ultimate saviours of the stability of the country. This, according to the theory, formed a part of their successful strategy to get themselves elected as president and vice-president of Indonesia in 2004. As the ultimate proof of this speculation, people often refer to unknown, shadowy figures whom they saw distributing both red (Christian) and white (Muslim) bandanas at different times and different places. These figures are considered to belong to a special, secret section within the TNI that is especially established to create uproar and chaos, when called for by the regime. The agency of the Ambonese society within this framework is often accounted for through a simple, essentialist explanation in which the Ambonese blame their own culture of violence, aggression and red-handedness for the ease with which these actors could manipulate existing religious fault lines. It was therefore not the wickedness of the Ambonese that is to blame for the outburst of inter-religious violence in the beginning of 1999 but rather their naivety or even their stupidity.

This provocation theory also has a written variant. The best-known proponent for the Ambonese case is the Indonesian academic George Junus Aditjondro who states that: 'The explanation for the continuing troubles in Maluku has to

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be found in a more systematic way in the interests of the TNI.’ (Aditjondro 2001: 119). The famous late human rights activist Munir also figured prominently in Ambonese newspapers proving the involvement of the Indonesian military behind the violence, amongst others through the selling of weapons (Jumat Kliwon, February 19, 1999). In particular in the Christian Ambonese media there seemed to exist a tendency to represent Ambon as the playground of vicious military elites (Suara Maluku, September 24, 1999; Suara Maluku, January 12, 2000).

The popularity of this framework is partly a reflex inherited from the New Order era where the perpetrators of violence were indeed often the highly nationalist, corrupt and authoritarian army. The main example is East Timor where in 1999, sections within the Indonesian military were largely responsible for instigating violence (Schulze 2001). The appeal of this hypothesis in Ambon was further enforced by the amateurish and corrupt actions taken by the security forces to deal with the conflict such as the selling of firearms to the warring parties (ICG 2002). This gave the impression that sections within these security forces deliberately tried to continue the violence for their own objectives. Nonetheless, these observations are not convincing evidence that there was a big master plan to instigate a high-intensity conflict in Ambon (Azca 2003). Rather, the popularity of this provocateur theory among broad parts of the Ambonese population and some sections of academia, points to a difficulty of coming to grips with the role of Ambonese society in the recent communal conflict. Many people give preference to a

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detached vision in which the Ambonese are treated as apathetic and naive, not being able to make their own decisions. Whilst laying the blame on outside forces may have a positive side in terms of overcoming local fault lines, it neglects the accountability of local actors in the field by holding unknown and elusive perpetrators responsible for the events (Von Benda Beckmann 2004, Purdey 2004).

3.2. A political economy explanation

The most elaborate and detailed accounts for the sudden eruption of violence in Ambon are those utilising a more classical political economy approach. Of special importance is the recent book by Van Klinken (2007) but also the earlier work by Bertrand (2002, 2004), Goss (2004) and Van Klinken (2001) has discerned certain particular characteristics of the Ambonese political economy which underpin the explosion of the religiously-inspired violence in 1999. A well-known Ambonese voice in this debate is the NGO activist and Muslim leader, Thamrin Ely (Ummat No. 35, March 15, 1999). Within this body of literature, two converging dynamics stand out. First, Ambon is characterised by a long-term politicization of religious identities that are strongly attached to networks negotiating access to both the colonial and the post-colonial state (Bertrand 2002: 62-63, Bertrand 2004: 115-116). As far back as the 17th century, Ambon witnessed the build-up of a tiny but visible Dutch colonial administration by the VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische*

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Compagnie, Dutch East-India Company), which had a close relationship with the Christian part of the population.² For instance, already during the first decades of VOC rule, Christians dominated the *landraad*, the highest body of the colonial administration in which Ambonese were allowed to participate (Knaap 2004: 53). Muslims, on the other hand, were considered more untrustworthy and prone to rebellion and were therefore left out of the colonial administration (Knaap 2004: 107, 124).

These close relations between the Dutch and the Christian Ambonese deepened after the abolition of the world wide monopoly on cloves in 1863 and the ensuing economic malaise which gripped the whole Ambonese region. With the price of cloves plummeting, on the one hand, and the expansion of the Dutch East Indies requiring a growing colonial administration on the other, the number of surplus workers in the Moluccas willing to take up jobs in the colonial administration and the KNIL (*Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger*, Royal Army of the Dutch Indies) grew (Chauvel 1990: 37).³ With predominantly Protestant Ambonese filling these

² There is also a minority Catholic community in Ambon. When throughout this thesis reference is made to Christians, this includes both the Catholic and the Protestant community in Maluku.

³ This special relationship ultimately gave occasion to the RMS rebellion in 1950. Within the KNIL, a privileged position was reserved for Moluccans, many of whom fought the Indonesian nationalists between 1945-1949, together with the Dutch army. When the Dutch surrendered in 1949 and Indonesia became an independent country, they continued to struggle for an independent South Maluku. This separatist struggle was mainly supported by Christians but also some Muslims joined in. When this attempt failed, thousands of Moluccans were shipped to the Netherlands. A small

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jobs, a system of religious divisions was installed in which a Protestant elite increasingly gained privileged access to the colonial bureaucracy and the political and economic advantages related to it (Bartels 2000). As historian Richard Chauvel notes: 'Under colonial patronage, they (Christian Ambonese) acquired a privileged status above their compatriots (and below the Dutch)' (Chauvel 1980: 47). In effect, this rendered the Muslim population second-class citizens in colonial Ambonese society (Chauvel 1980, Bartels 2003), and to this day Ambonese Protestants are somewhat bitterly referred to as the '*anak emas*' or the golden child by the Muslim population.⁴ This privileged status of the Protestant elite was largely maintained following Indonesian independence (Bertrand 2002). Both in the Sukarno era and during the New Order, Ambonese Christians preserved close ties to the regime in Jakarta through which they kept a strong grip on the local bureaucracy.

Discussing state access for the Ambon case in independent Indonesia, it is important to bear in mind that the province of Maluku has always been

minority kept waging armed rebellion against the Indonesian state until the mid sixties. For an elaborate account, see: Chauvel 1990.

⁴ This lower class status of the Muslim population is also illustrated by the Dutch doctor E.W.A. Ludeking who wrote in 1868 in his 'Schets van de Residentie Amboina': 'The people of the residency of Amboina can properly be divided into three classes: firstly, those who because of their Christianity, burger status etc. can be given the collective name of Ambonese...; secondly the class of Alifurese who constitute the indigenous people of Ceram and Buru, and who are far the most numerous; thirdly, the far less significant class of Moslems, together with Arabs and other Asiatics' (cited in Chauvel 1980: 40).

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characterized by a vast government apparatus, accounting for a huge part of all available jobs in the region. For instance, in 1990 there were about 55.000 civil servants in the province, meaning that government jobs accounted for 33% of all available jobs outside the primary sector (agriculture, fisheries and forestry). Even in absolute terms, this number of 55.000 is higher compared to East Java, a province whose population is 17 times as big compared to Maluku. (Van Klinken 2007:34-52, 90). Logically, this importance of the state in terms of job opportunities dramatically increased competition to obtain access to this state in Ambon. In particular from the late eighties onwards, high-ranking positions in the administration became increasingly contested between the two religious blocks. One of the first, strongly divisive figures was Dicky Wattimena, Christian mayor of the city of Ambon between 1985 and 1991, who was particularly resented among Muslim migrants as he attempted to break their strong grip on informal economies such as petty trading (Tempo, March 15, 1999). Around the same time, a rival Muslim network emerged challenging the traditional Protestant hegemony in the region (Bertrand 2002, 2004).⁵ This network was organized around the national Muslim organization ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia*, Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) founded in 1990. This organization was chaired by Minister of Research and Technology and later to become Indonesia's first post-New Order president, B.J. Habibie. At its

⁵ Evidently, the establishment of a network of Ambonese Muslim intellectuals did not come overnight. Following decolonization, Ambonese Muslims gradually developed contacts throughout Indonesia and the outside world, thereby setting in motion a slow yet steady process of emancipation of the Ambonese Muslim society (Chauvel 1980).

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second national congress, held in 1995, almost half of all Indonesian ministers were elected to leadership positions within ICMI, making it one of the most important 'state corporatist organizations' through which the New Order aimed to control the army and gain the support of a fast growing group of middle class Muslims (Liddle 1996: 613, 618). This sharp rise of ICMI is illustrative of the so-called greening of the New Order, in which Suharto was turning to modernist Islamic groupings to support his regime from the late eighties onwards and was increasingly 'playing the Muslim card' (Hefner 2000: 128). In the meantime, modernist Islamic groupings such as ICMI gained a substantial influence in the upper echelons of the Suharto cabinet, which increased the fear of many Christian Ambonese of becoming a small minority in a Muslim dominated country. An important victory for this network at the Moluccan level was the appointment of Akib Latuconsina - a prominent and well-known member of the Ambonese ICMI branch at the time - in 1992 as the first Muslim Moluccan governor. Among the traditional Protestant elite this move was interpreted as proof of an Islamic offensive challenging their traditional hegemonic status and thus further polarizing the two religious communities. This growing power of the Muslim part of Ambonese society was also symbolized by the term 'OPEK'. This is an abbreviation that stands for the villages of Ori, Pulauw and Kaliolo situated on the island of Haruku. These villages are home to some well-known Muslim families such as Tuasikal, Latuconsina and Marasabessy whom obtained a growing influence in the state bureaucracy throughout the nineties.

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The second factor explaining communal conflict in the province of Maluku is the emergence of specific opportunities to renegotiate access to the state arising from the fall of the New Order. This was further enforced through a far-reaching decentralization move which transferred different competences from the national level to the provinces and districts. Decentralization thus made gaining access to the state at these regional levels all the more relevant and therefore all the more contested. A creeping polarization that was already set in for more than a decade ultimately took a drastic turn once the Suharto-led centralist state finally imploded in May 1998 and alternative networks attempted to seize the chance to use the institutional turmoil to challenge existing power structures (Van Klinken 2007). During this process, religion became a vehicle for political mobilization in a fast-changing society, with people becoming much more involved in political life through the first open and direct elections since 1955.

Apart from the emergence of certain opportunities during this period, mutual suspicion and the anxiety of losing powerful positions in a new and uncertain era further politicized the two religious communities. Among Christians, a general phobia existed that post-New Order Indonesia would be transformed into an Islamic state, thus putting them into a vulnerable position in Maluku.⁶

⁶ This general fear among Indonesian Christians of becoming an Islamic state somewhat dissipated following the poor results for Islamic parties during the national elections 1999. In these elections the two big nationalist parties Golkar and PDI-P won 24% and 30,60% of the votes, respectively. The biggest Islamic party, PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, United Development Party) only won some 11,60% of the votes (Singh 2003)

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Conversely, amongst Muslims there was a suspicion that in the new democratic era the PDI-P (*Partai Demokrat Indonesia - Perjuangan*, Democratic Party Indonesia – Struggle) would obtain a majority in the Moluccan elections and use it to reinstate Christian control over the state bureaucracy. This Christian dominance of the PDI-P in Maluku stems from the fact that the PDI-P is a compilation of different parties that were forced to merge together in 1973 to form the PDI (*Partai Demokrat Indonesia*, Indonesian Democratic Party).⁷ In October 1998, the PDI changed its name into PDI-P, adding *Perjuangan* (struggle) to stress the difference with the inferior position they held during the New Order.

Historically, the most important building blocks of the PDI in Ambon have been the Parkindo (*Partei Kristen Indonesia*, Indonesian Christian Party) and the PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*, National Indonesian Party). In particular the influence of the Parkindo has been central in defining the Christian character of the Moluccan PDI-P branch (Van Klinken 2001: 22). Traditionally, Parkindo has been the most powerful political party representing the interests of the Christians, in particular in the town of Ambon, where, for instance, in the elections of 1955 Parkindo obtained 50% of the votes, making it the town's dominant party. Even in the provincial

⁷ This should be understood as a government plan to curtail opposition and transform multiparty politics into corporate group representation. The reason why opposition parties were not simply abolished was the fact that these parties still represented important elite factions within Indonesian society which could not completely be pushed aside. Moreover, the New Order regime wanted to maintain some sort of 'democratic appearance' in order to seek international legitimacy (Eklöf 2003: 54-59).

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elections of 1971, in which there was substantial intimidation exercised on people in Ambon to vote for the government party Golkar, Parkindo managed to remain the largest party in Ambon city obtaining 6 seats while Golkar only won 5 seats (Van Fraassen 1972: 1-3).⁸ When the New Order finally collapsed, PDI-P saw its chance to shed the subordinate place under Golkar and position itself at the forefront of Ambonese political life.⁹ However, the prospect of the PDI-P creating a new Christian stronghold in Maluku made many Ambonese Muslims nervous, since they did not have a strong, unified party that could equal the PDI-P.¹⁰ This mutual distrust led to a further activation of religiously-defined patrimonial networks. The work done by Van Klinken (2007: 96-106) demonstrates how local Ambonese elites with obvious political party affiliations were instrumental for instigating this violence through these networks, which in many cases were church and

⁸ One of the best-known Ambonese politicians in the history of Indonesia, Johannes Leimena, was also a Parkindo member. Leimena served many years as health minister and ultimately became Deputy Prime Minister under Sukarno from 1957 until 1966.

⁹ This expected dominance of the PDI-P has to a certain extent become true. Since 2003, the PDI-P has taken over the governorship of Maluku through popular figure of Karel Albert Ralahalu (Tomsa 2009). In 2002, local PDI-P strongman Jopie Papilaya, has been elected as the mayor of Ambon. Only in the provincial legislative elections of 2004, the PDI-P (10 seats) was beaten by the Golkar party (11 seats) with a narrow margin.

¹⁰ Not coincidentally, the victory of the PDI-P in June 1999 for the Ambonese city council, gaining 53% of the votes, was one of the triggers which started a second round of rioting in July 1999 (Van Klinken 2001).

mosque affiliated organizations.¹¹ An example of such an organization is the youth wing of the GPM (*Gereja Protestan Maluku*, Protestant Church of Maluku).

3.3. Private opportunities during collective violence: theoretical framework

Although this focus on the regional political economy and struggles to access a patrimonial state contains strong arguments to explain the outburst of violence in Ambon, it also contains some deficiencies. First, it is often noted that studies on collective violence tend to overlook the factors that further escalate certain riots and contribute to their perpetuation (Brass 1996, 1997). This is the case with these political economy accounts that succeed in explaining the causal roots of a conflict but have greater difficulty grappling with the ongoing logics and dynamics of protracted communal violence. In other words, they fail to account for the violence's protracted nature. Second, the agency of the 'masses' is largely underestimated in this structuralist framework. These masses are portrayed as languid actors simply following greedy elites. Yet, as Fearon and Laitin (2000: 854) argue, it is not sufficient

¹¹ It is worthy of note that in the build-up to the violence, colours associated with political parties ultimately became symbolic markers of armed militias during the conflict. For instance, red has always been the party colour of the PDI-P. However, this colour came to be increasingly associated with the whole Christian community. Ultimately red became one of the differentiating symbols of the Christian militias during the conflict which contrasted the white colour of Muslim militias.

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to look at elite interests in explaining collective violence, an equal amount of attention has to be paid to reasons behind why people decide to engage in conflict.

These two deficiencies come together in one simple but essential question concerning why so many ‘ordinary folks’, who had little chance of ever accessing the state bureaucracy became involved in the violence. Related to this question is how one accounts for the huge numbers of internally displaced this conflict brought about. In general, international organizations put the number of internally displaced in Maluku and Ambon at one third of the total population during the high-intensity violence (ICG 2002, Mason 2001). The figures that come across the official channels are somewhat lower. The UNOCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) puts the number of IDPs at the height of the conflict in 2002 at 338,320 out of a total Moluccan population of 1,311,565 (UNOCHA 2002: 39). A report published by the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) declared that in the years 2002 and 2003, there were 275,091 IDPs in the province of Maluku, or about one fifth of the total population. At that time, Maluku was the province with most IDPs in the whole Indonesian archipelago (INCHR 2005).¹² Despite the fact that no real conclusive data can be given about the

¹² These data should be treated with care. Internal displacement was often a short-lived phenomenon depending on waves of high-intensity warfare or rumors about a pending attack. In a couple of days or weeks, the number of internally displaced therefore could alter significantly. Moreover, the different organizations counting the internally displaced used different criteria. For instance, the data provided by the

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exact number of IDPs, even the most conservative estimates illustrate that displacement was not a marginal phenomenon but affected large parts of the population. An essential question therefore concerns why so many people became violently expelled throughout the recent *kerusuhan*.

To answer this question, this chapter seeks to explain how the violence initiated private economic opportunities that led to the involvement of a range of new actors in the conflict. It is particularly relevant to refer to the work done by Stathis Kalyvas (2003, 2006) in this regard. Through an elaborate analysis of a whole range of civil wars, Kalyvas concludes that ‘civil wars are not binary conflicts but complex and ambiguous processes that foster an apparently massive, though variable, mix of identities and actions’ (Kalyvas 2003: 475). In this mix of identities and actions, Kalyvas states that actions at the micro-level of society in situations of protracted civil warfare often have a private character and bear little relation to the reasons behind its instigation. Civil warfare therefore presents a forum within which actors take the

Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights are based on official registrations conducted by the provincial government. Overall, the people who were registered as IDPs were the ones permanently living in officially designated IDP camps. The people who migrated to family or friends and in this sense also were internally displaced, were not included in this group. On the other hand, many people registering as an IDP were not at all IDPs. For instance, a large group in the camp of the IDP camp of THR consisted of university students. Furthermore, in these registration procedures, many people living in the nearby neighborhoods to the camp also stood in line to register as an IDP in order to receive reconstruction funds (BBR, *Bantuan Bangunan Rumah*). As I observed myself in THR, this could end up in rough scuffles between the people from the camp and the people from the surrounding area.

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opportunity to settle private disputes outside the realm of the master configuration of the conflict. Whilst everyday tensions would never result into violence under normal circumstances, the conflict opens up possibilities of settling old accounts (Kalyvas 2006: 365). These ideas correspond to the distinction David Keen makes between bottom-up violence and top down violence during civil warfare (Keen 2002, 2008: 73-89). According to Keen, top down violence is mobilized by political leaders and entrepreneurs who deliberately manipulate ethnic, religious or other fault lines. In the case of Ambon, this typology is evident in the political struggles described above during which certain elites instigated the conflict through religiously defined grassroots organizations. Bottom-up violence on the other hand is actively embraced by a variety of ordinary people as a solution to problems of their own. Some authors such as Paul Brass even go as far to state that in some contexts the search for an objective and unambiguous cause of a riot/conflict becomes useless, as all actors participating in the violence do this based on personal motives. Based on a study of the New York draft riots that occurred in 1863, Brass (1996: 23) concludes that ‘... its course makes clear the futility of ascribing ‘cause’ and overall logic to the incidents which occur once a riot expands. It is possible to find for many, if not most, individual incidents particular reasons, such as local personal enmities or economic rivalries settled under the cover of chaos.’

These sorts of enmities and rivalries - in particular in relation to land access - are one of the reasons for effecting the displacement of so many people in

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Ambon. This is not to say that struggles to access land lie at the root of the violence. The only small debate on the role of land in the Ambonese conflict so far has centred on the question of whether land tensions and demographic pressure lie at the root of the conflict (Soselisa 2000: 76, Bartels 2000).¹³ The view defended here is that competition to access land does not explain the outburst of violence in the city of Ambon. In the run-up to the initial riots in January 1999, no specific organizations mobilizing people around the issue of land can be found, contrary to the case of struggles to access the state bureaucracy. Moreover, struggles over land and issues of migration and population pressure cannot be seen as typically Moluccan or Ambonese as these also play in other parts of Indonesia that never turned into an enduring communal conflict (see: Clark 2004 on Flores and East Java and Von Benda Beckmann F. and K. 2004 on Minangkabau). Nevertheless, land and religiously defined competition to access land quickly became an issue during the conflict. The subsequent case studies of the villages of Hila, Kaitetu, Waai and Liang show how many people had their own incentives for engaging in violence and displacing certain religious communities. These are related to the settling of private disputes regarding access to economic resources such as land. In this regard, land became a point of contention throughout the conflict in Ambon rather than a clear-cut motivation for its commencement.

¹³ For a similar debate on the Poso region, see Acciaiolio (2001), Van Klinken (2007: 72-79).

3.4. Case study: the Christians of Hila and Kaitetu

Kaitetu is a village situated in the Muslim dominated Leihitu peninsula on the island of Ambon where, before the January 1999 riots, one Christian minority of some 120 households lived (see map No. 2). This Christian community consists of people who migrated from neighbouring islands to act as guards around the VOC Fort Amsterdam during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Over centuries, they developed strong social bonds with the villages of Hila and Kaitetu. Although the community administratively belonged to Kaitetu, according to *adat* or customary law, the land the Christians lived on was claimed by a clan coming from neighbouring Hila.¹⁴ Therefore, the Christians have always characterized themselves as originating from Hila. This apparent contradiction only concerned the land they lived on. The question of the land the Christians were cultivating is different and more complex. Here we can observe how a mix of different property rights allowed the majority of Christian households to obtain secure and satisfactory access to land. Due to their migrant status, the Christian community was not considered a part of the original *negeri* (village) of Kaitetu or Hila. According to strict *adat* law they could therefore not obtain the ownership rights necessary to cultivate perennial crops such as *cengkeh* (clove), *kelapa* (coconut) or *pala* (nutmeg). Within the *adat* system, such as it is commonly practised in Hila and Kaitetu, a free cultivation of long-term crops is solely

¹⁴ For a more elaborate explanation on the Ambonese *adat* system, see chapter 5

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reserved for people who originate from a clan (*dati*) belonging to an original *negeri* (village). Despite the migrant status of the Christians living in Hila and Kaitetu, their overall social standing was higher than that of other non-Moluccan settlers who are still somewhat derogatorily referred to by terms such as '*penungsi kemarin*' (refugees from yesterday) '*buruh tanah*' (land labourer) or '*orang pendatang*' (migrants).¹⁵ These terms were never applied to the Christians. Accordingly, different Christian families received the *adat* rights to freely grow long-term crops on lands that belonged to these 'original' Muslim families, in many cases through inter-marriages with indigenous clans.¹⁶ Throughout the years, they also managed to buy some lands privately on which they cultivated different crops. Other migrants such as the Butonese also received the privilege to cultivate these crops but had to share the harvest with the people of Hila and Kaitetu (Brouwer 1998).

The Christian community fled on the 20th January 1999, one day after the initial riots buffeted the town of Ambon on the other side of the island. During their flight, the community was split up, with one part going to Hatiwe Besar,

¹⁵ In Hila and Kaitetu, these non-Moluccan settlers consist of Butonese communities, originating from the neighbouring island of Sulawesi. Most of these people already settled in Ambon for decades. Their migration to Ambon and surrounding islands is a spontaneous one driven by economic incentives.

¹⁶ Understanding resource management in the Ambonese context requires distinguishing between property rights for land as such and property rights for what is on the land such as trees or houses. In this case, many Christians did not own the land but nevertheless had rights to grow crops on these lands, see also (Von Benda-Beckmann and Taale 1996: 41)

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the other to Laha. After being separated for three years, they finally settled in 2002 in Tanah Putih in the *negeri* of Tawiri, nearby the airport, where they still live today. In attempting to discern why the Christians had to flee so immediately, the story appears somewhat unclear. According to the Christians, Muslims from Hila chased them away by destroying their houses and other property, something which is vigorously denied by anyone interviewed in Hila. According to their version, bands of youth from the neighbouring village of Hitu were responsible for driving the Christians away in the beginning of 1999. Interestingly, what is acknowledged in Hila is that people from Hila were responsible for cutting down the crops and trees the Christians were cultivating within the borders of their village and for destroying the houses they lived in.

How do we understand this story? First of all, it is important to interpret the destruction of property as a deliberate strategy to drive people away. Talking with different displaced communities throughout the island, not all of these people were directly physically threatened or had to run for their life. For instance, many IDPs stated that they decided to leave their place after their windows were smashed with stones or their houses were daubed with paint. This served as a symbol that they were no longer welcome in the place they lived in. This was also the case in Hila, albeit in a more hastily manner. People were chased away by bands of youth throwing stones and shouting all sorts of provocations. Rumors that Muslims from Hitu were on their way to Hila after having eradicated the Christian village of Benteng Kareng, only

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increased the agony which gripped this community. In their flight however, nobody was killed or even wounded. In this regard, there is little utility distinguishing between those who chased the people away and those who destroyed crops and houses afterwards. In reality, this was a part of the same movement and largely occurred in the same time frame. The same day the Christians fled to the mountains, people started destroying property belonging to this Christian community. In this regard, destruction should not be interpreted as the manifestation of some sort of 'irrational religious fervor'. In most cases, it was a deliberate attempt to clear a certain space with the aim of assuming control. At the same time, this case study also refines the representation of the Ambonese violence as an all Christian against all Muslim conflict. Many people - such as the community of Kaitetu - took no part in the violence and even attempted to offer protection to people who were ejected.

Second, there are clear-cut economic reasons behind the expulsion of the Christians. The cutting down of trees is illustrative. As *adat* law states that one loses the informal *adat* property rights to his land once the long-term crops have died or have been eradicated, their cutting indicates a conscious attempt by some villagers of Hila to reclaim lands Christians have been cultivating for generations. In this regard, the destruction of property not only serves to chase a community away but also becomes a deliberate attempt to symbolically eradicate its remnants and take over their property. As a result, the Christian community has once and for all lost these lands in Hila. In a

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similar, seemingly contradictory way, the houses belonging to Christians were destroyed and burned down by youth who also came from Hila. Rather than an act of 'irrational' behaviour, this destruction should be understood as a strategic move in a simmering border conflict between the villages of Kaitetu and Hila. As described above, the land the Christians were living on was claimed by a customary clan of Hila, although this belonged within the administrative boundary of Kaitetu.¹⁷ This border dispute dates to colonial times and has resulted in a strained relationship between the village of Kaitetu and this customary clan. This border conflict was given new impetus one year before the outbreak of violence when a large number of the Christian community attempted to obtain a formal ownership certificate for this land. This would have implied that the Christians would become the formal owners of the land; the customary clan would lose their customary claim and the village of Kaitetu could more securely claim this land as their village land. This process has been halted due to the violent removal of the Christian community. Through the destruction of their property, any trace suggesting that Christians once lived on this land was removed. Since then, this 'empty' land has been reclaimed by the customary clan from Hila and different signs have been put up that state that the land cannot be entered without their consent.

¹⁷ Despite the small size of the plot, this land was considered to be of high economic value due to the presence of the VOC fort Amsterdam, the Emmanuel church being the oldest church in the whole of Indonesia and the well of the famous 17th century biologist Rumphius. These assets could potentially lead to some small-scale touristic exploitation of the area.

3.5. Case Study: Waai

A second example where a localized, long-term border dispute re-erupted after the urban riots of January 1999, occurred in the villages of Waai and Liang. The Christian village of Waai is geographically wedged between the Muslim villages of Liang and Tulehu (see map No.2). Starting from the 23rd of February 1999, Waai became involved in a fierce battle with these two neighboring villages resulting in dozens of dead and wounded on both sides. Ultimately, it was not until Waai was attacked simultaneously from the sides of Tulehu, Liang and the sea with the help of newly arrived, well equipped Laskar Jihad fighters, that this community was forced to flee to Passo in July 2000 where they stayed until August 2003. This final offensive was divided in two major parts. The first attack occurred around the 6th and 7th of July resulting in about 22 deaths, 51 heavily wounded and the displacement of the majority of the Waai community (Suara Maluku, July 8, 2000). The final attack to clear the whole village was then set in on the 30th of July 2000 until the 1st of August resulting in at least 23 deaths at the Christian side (Suara Maluku, August 5, 2000). Data on the Muslim side could not be obtained.¹⁸

¹⁸ Remarkably, in the same newspaper reports it was stated that on the Christian side there were about 17 deaths and 10 wounded while at the Muslim side there were 5 deaths and 41 wounded. These data therefore seem to buttress the argument that heavier and more professional weaponry was found on the Muslim side because of the involvement of the Laskar Jihad. The Christians on the other hand had to stick to amateurish weapons such as spears, stones, self made guns... making a lot of wounded but less deaths.

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Although this story can easily be interpreted as an ‘all against all’ religious war, a more complex picture emerges when reconstructing the story in detail. It is apparent how people from Waai interpret the violence with Liang, on the one hand, and Tulehu, on the other hand, in two different frameworks. The harsh fighting with Liang is explained by a narrative that originates in colonial times and in which the recent fighting is perceived as the last chapter in a long history of violence. In this regard, a clear distinction is made between the recent *kerusuhan* and this historically strained relationship with Liang, although it is admitted that both became closely intertwined. Trying to reconstruct the history of this border dispute, one is confronted with a variety of differing interpretations, not only between but also within the two villages. Yet, the overall rationale behind the competing land claims is a dispute over who arrived and cultivated the land first, guaranteeing the customary ownership rights over that land. In Waai, the people of Liang are perceived as invaders of their historical territory which was originally considered to be much larger. According to people living in Liang, these claims by Waai are baseless. These conflicting interpretations gave rise to a simmering border dispute between the two villages, with occasional outbursts of violence occurring before 1999. On both sides, the detailed knowledge with which these violent stories are told and retold is remarkable, even amongst teenagers who give accurate accounts of legal battles and killings during Dutch times. Also apparent is the ferocity and scale of these skirmishes. During certain periods, all children and women of the village had to flee to the mountains for a couple of days where crossing each other’s borders would result in certain

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death. As the riots in Ambon commenced, these simmering tensions were given new impetus as the two parties were provided with opportunities to settle this long-standing dispute. On the border between Waai and Liang, all trees and crops growing there were destroyed with the aim to take over these contested lands. Eventually, the people from Waai were forced to flee. This gave Liang the chance to fell all the trees on the border and also to erect a marker to delineate a new boundary between the two villages, thereby usurping large tracts of land owned by people from Waai before the conflict.

The violence between the villages of Waai and Tulehu is understood in a different framework since historical tensions are not considered to be at the root of it. In fact, Waai and Tulehu have a traditionally close relationship and they consider themselves to be from the same ancestors, despite their different religious background. Proof of this is found in the similar family names in the two villages. For instance, while Salomi is a common family name in Waai, many people in Tulehu have Tuasalomi as a family name. Neither has the border between the villages ever been contested. This does not mean that relations between both communities remained totally peaceful throughout the *kerusuhan*. Regular violent skirmishes were noted but the level of violence never reached the same intensity as that of Liang. Although data on the number of people wounded and dead are lacking, all parties agreed that - until the arrival of the Laskar Jihad in May 2000 - most heavy fighting was in fact conducted on the border between Waai and Liang, resulting in most of the dead and wounded. Due to good relations between Waai and Tulehu, traditional leaders from Tulehu kept in contact with leaders from Waai and

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also made several attempts to keep hot tempered youth under control in their village. People from Waai and Tulehu also often visited each other before May/June 2000 in order to buy food or just socialize. This was unimaginable in the case of Waai/Liang where crossing the border was considered extremely perilous. Also illustrative is the fact that the land on the border between Waai and Tulehu never suffered the same fate as those on the border with Liang. On the Tulehu border no crops or trees were destroyed. In fact, many people of Tulehu took care of the trees owned by the people from Waai during the flight of the Waai community in Passo. In a similar vein, no borders have been removed or other attempts made to take over land.

So what then explains the fact that the final attack on Waai in July 2000 also came from Tulehu? According to people from Waai and Tulehu, the primary reason for the attack is linked to the considerable Laskar Jihad presence in Tulehu from May 2000 onwards. This Laskar Jihad set up an important *posko* (coordination centre) in the village of Tulehu, more particular in the *dusun* (sub-village) of Gurnala. It is only following the entry of the Laskar Jihad - constantly referred to as an alien, Javanese phenomenon - that a fierce attack was executed. In this regard, the violence that occurred between Tulehu and Waai is not understood within the framework of a long-term, historical enmity between the two villages but instead is considered a product of the recent *kerusuhan* and more particularly a product of the pressure and intimidation the Laskar Jihad fighters exercised among the villagers of Tulehu. This also indicates how the entrance of the Laskar Jihad gave a new turn to the conflict

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and became an important additional factor to conduct violence, apart from localized struggles to access resources such as land. Although it is always hard to distinguish between fact and myth in reconstructing these types of stories, it is remarkable that the interpretation of events is largely similar between the people of Waai and Tulehu. Through numerous details, people in both Waai and Tulehu try to demonstrate how the recent riots were nothing more than an 'accident de parcours' within a normally peaceful relation. For instance, it was often noted that the people of Tulehu came to warn the people of Waai just before the last big attacks in July 2000 so that older people and children could take refuge in the woods and many lives could be saved. As one older Waai women told me: 'people from Tulehu came to warn us and risked their lives while the Liang people just wanted us all dead.'

3.6. Contested spaces in urban areas

These two examples illustrate how the general Muslim against Christian dichotomy through which communal conflict in Ambon was organized found fertile ground since competition for access to land was partly organized through these same religious lines. While in the case of Hila and Kaitetu, this made a radical difference between engaging or not engaging in violence, in the Waai case this explains considerable variations in the intensity of the violence. Too often this observation has been neglected in analysis of the Ambon conflict which focus on national and regional dynamics tends to

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overlook the way violence is conducted at the micro-levels of society. These sorts of historical, local tensions nevertheless serve as one of the primary explanations why the violence escalated so quickly and dramatically and cannot be overlooked if one wants to fully understand the complexities and different genealogies of the violence (von Benda Beckmann 2004: 292).

These kinds of private opportunities surfaced not just through seeking to gain access to land in rural areas. Local political elites were instrumental in instigating riots in the town of Ambon with the primary objective of obtaining access to the state in a new and uncertain era (Van Klinken 2007). Yet, this observation does not fully account for the incentives people - in particular male youth - in this urban context had to start engaging in communal conflict. Similarly in the town Ambon, cleansing whole neighborhoods of a religious minority often followed a particular economic rationale. A typical example is the fact that young Christian males have taken over major parts of the informal transport sector from which Muslims have been violently expelled. The near monopolization of this transport sector by Muslim migrants before the start of the *kerusuhan* was already a source of enduring frustration among many unemployed male Ambonese youth, occasionally resulting in low intensity skirmishes between the two groups (von Benda Beckmann 2004). The conflict presented a unique chance to settle these disputes for previously marginalized groups such as unemployed young Christian men. For instance, all the *becaks* (tricycle taxis) left behind by minority Muslim communities were immediately possessed by Christians. Importantly, in addition, the

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spaces where the *becak* business was performed by Muslims have been 'cleared'. Bearing this in mind, the logic behind violent evictions in rural and urban areas have striking resemblances. In both cases, access to space became one of the central incentives to drive people out. Whilst in rural areas this space is mainly used for agricultural purposes, in urban areas this space has been occupied to engage in informal economic activities such as transport.

Various sources stated that competition for access to the informal economy are at the root of the conflict in Ambon. This is particularly the case for reports written shortly after the start of the first riots by fact-finding teams of the local Unpatti University (Tim Pengkajian 1999) and the Jakarta based Universitas Indonesia (Tim Peneliti Universitas Indonesia 1999). In these reports, the existence of sharp communal tensions for access to the informal economy in the town of Ambon are considered pivotal to the start of the conflict. In the Universitas Indonesia report, these tensions are named as the most prominent factor explaining the outburst of violence. This competition is also understood to be ethnically defined by the division between the Muslim migrant community of the so-called BMM (Butonese, Bugis and Makkasarese) who largely dominated the informal economy prior to the start of the bloodshed, and the autochthonous Ambonese. It is then further claimed that this ethnic violence was gradually transformed into a religious conflict (Tim Peneliti Universitas Indonesia 1999: 118-124). Contrary to this view, I believe that competition for access to the informal economy was not the cause of the violence but should be understood as part of the ongoing rationale

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within the violence. Similar to the question of land access, no specific organizations mobilizing people around the issue of the informal economy could be found in the lead up to the conflict. Moreover, one could query the timing of the violence, given that tensions surrounding access to the informal economy were already present throughout the nineties. Viewed from this perspective, a classic political economy approach explains much better the specific temporal and spatial dimensions behind the violence. At the same time, existing frustrations and tensions arising from these issues constituted a rationale to sustain the violence and settle disputes for economic gains.

In the Universitas Indonesia and the Unpatti reports, it is also stated that the initial urban riots in Ambon were framed through an ethnic perspective and only later evolved into a religious conflict. This view is shared by many Ambonese, in particular Christian Ambonese. For instance, some Christian Ambonese stated that felt deceived by their Muslim Ambonese brethren because they made a deliberate decision to side with the Muslim migrants after the first weeks of rioting in the town. These sorts of statements are overdone as communal violence in Ambon was religiously framed from the start. Yet, what is true is that ethnic and religious fault lines have always been closely linked to each other from the beginning of the unrest, although the religious framing of the conflict dominated. Competition for access to space in urban and rural areas always contained a strong ethnic dimension that plays out between autochthonous Ambonese, including both Christians and Muslims, and migrant communities essentially consisting of Muslims.

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Studying the issue of land access in Ambon, one quickly discerns ethnic tensions that are essentially concentrated between Muslim Butonese migrants and 'autochthonous' Ambonese who are both Christian and Muslim. For instance, many Butonese settlements are found in Hila at the border with Hitu. Communal relations between these migrant Muslim communities and the autochthonous Muslim community of Hila have always been quite tense, as evidenced by different instances of verbal and physical aggression from the past (Von Benda Beckmann 1990: 250-252). Until now, this type of ethnically framed low-intensity violence occurs once in a while in Hila, as in many other places on the island. In most cases, these incidents are caused by conflicting interpretations of institutional arrangements for the management of resources. Yet, while these tensions exist throughout the region, the recent violence did not present an opportunity to settle these types of disputes, since they are ethnically defined and occur among Muslims. Within the religious logic through which the conflict was fought, settling these sorts of ethnic disputes would not be acceptable. On the other hand, where minority Butonese communities lived in Christian areas, they were chased away and in most instances their land was deliberately taken over by Christians. Put somewhat cynically, the religious fault line laid down the 'rules of the game' which guided the settlement of private disputes. Therefore, Ambon did not descend into a situation of total chaos in which all economic tensions were at play. The general Muslim versus Christian opposition still mattered in Ambon as it prescribed the lines along which these disputes could be settled.

3.7. Conclusion: the need for empirically grounded, integrative approaches

In most accounts seeking to explain the recent communal warfare in Ambon, strong attention is paid to political transformations occurring on the national level following the implosion of the New Order in May 1998. This also largely applies to other cases of communal violence that occurred around that time in Indonesia. In addition, the agency of ‘ordinary folk’ engaging (or not engaging) in communal conflict tends to be overlooked. As Jemma Purdey (2004: 201), in summarizing the existing literature on violence in Indonesia after the New Order, puts it: ‘More needs to be done, however, to explore the emotions and compulsions that exist among members of the crowds who participate in violence’. A similar critique has been made by Patrick Barron et.al., stating that analysis of conflicts in Indonesia often lack primary empirical data, thereby: ‘... overlooking possible connections between smaller scale (everyday) forms of violence and large incidents’ (Barron et.al. 2004: 8). The same applies to Ambon, where, despite a wide array of literature about the origins of the violence, elaborate empirical accounts of the way violence was conducted at the micro-levels of society remain scarce. As a consequence, ‘ordinary folk’ (Brass 1997) are too easily viewed as an amorphous mass following the politics of greedy elites. The case studies presented here refute this image. People had specific, private interests in engaging in communal violence and were much more proactive than generally believed. This view is probably best summed up by a Muslim friend who,

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throughout an informal evening dinner, made the following remark: ‘Of course there were provocateurs in the conflict. We were all constantly provoking each other’. This sorts of remarks ascribing agency to Ambonese society in the *kerusuhan* have been rather rare throughout my fieldwork. When the first Christian-Muslim riots broke out in the town of Ambon, people had exceptional opportunities to take over land, particularly in those cases where the institutional arrangements to access land have traditionally been contested. In most instances, these disputes took root during colonial times and have since occasionally resulted in recurrent outbursts of violence prior to 1999. Thus displacement and the subsequent ‘clearing’ of space have to be understood as an important factor behind the violence itself rather than as an unforeseen byproduct.¹⁹ This does not only apply to rural areas. A similar dynamic appeared in urban areas where the clearing of space became the essential means for taking over certain activities in the informal economy.

Importantly, this observation does not serve as the ultimate explanation behind the recent violence in Ambon; many other factors need to be accounted for in order to obtain a balanced understanding of why people decided (or not) to fight. Stressing the importance of private opportunities during communal violence does not mean that the recent episode of civil warfare in Ambon can be simply viewed as a situation in which ‘rational’

¹⁹ Similar observations have also been made for cases of separatist collective violence in post-Suharto Indonesia, see Robinson (2008) on East Timor and Aspinall (2008) on Aceh.

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people solely sought 'rational' economic self-interest. Studying conflict at the micro-levels of society, one is inevitably confronted with a diversity of actions, making it impossible to point to the one true motive on the ground (Brass 1997, Kalyvas 2003). In other words, there exists no golden bullet theory for understanding communal conflict. A full understanding of the conflict that engulfed Ambon therefore demands an integrative and multidisciplinary approach that takes into account the many overlapping dimensions that characterized the violence (Pannell 2003, von Benda Beckmann 2004). Apart from the settling of private disputes, there is a multiplicity of other reasons why people engaged in communal violence. For instance, Dieter Bartels notes with regard to the violence in the Moluccas: 'religious righteousness was not only the means to gain political and economic power but also an end in itself, proving the superiority of the religion of the victors' (Bartels 2003: 20). In informal discussions, people regularly cite religion as the most important reason to engage in violence. For instance, one older Christian women who had been active in the production of guns and bombs openly stated '... foreign researchers such as you too easily downplay the central role played by religion in the conflict. I know it is maybe hard for western people to understand but for me it was all about the preservation of my religion.' A similar argument is put forward by Goss (2004), who in relation to the conflict in Ambon warns not to simply dismiss religious justifications for violence as some sort of false consciousness, hiding the 'real' economic, territorial and economic grievances.

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It is also apparent how often one is confronted with individualized, apparently banal reasons to engage in violence that have little connection with the bigger economic and political picture. For instance, revenge is often mentioned as the reason to kill people from the other religion. Similarly, their involvement in the violence gave many young people - in particular unemployed young men - a new social standing. Becoming the protector of the community gave them local heroes status and - at least in their own eyes - sharply increased their popularity amongst girls. Important markers of this newly acquired standing was the free provision of meals and the fact that they could ask for free cigarettes to 'whoever we wanted'.²⁰ Considering this multitude of factors to start engaging in communal violence, stressing the importance of private opportunities to access space can only form a part of a much more complex and multilayered picture. A number of extra empirically grounded studies trying to analyze how and why violence was conducted at the micro-levels of society could therefore increase our understanding about the reasons and ongoing logic behind the recent communal conflict in Ambon. Obviously, this also counts for many other cases of communal conflict in post-Suharto Indonesia.

²⁰ One can question if this self-proclaimed societal status was shared among broader parts of the population. In the town of Ambon, these '*akar rumput*' (grassroots) were definitely popular among some sections of society as they were considered to be the defenders of the neighborhood in case conventional security forces failed in this task. On the other hand, these organizations were also referred to as '*geng-geng*' and many people noted that, as the conflict progressed, the aggression by which these gangs claimed free food or constantly asked for '*uang rokok*' (cigarette money, tips) dramatically increased. In some cases, businesses were extorted in exchange for protection.

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Displacement, income generation and food distribution during urban communal conflict¹

This chapter aims to offer some answers to the question of how internally displaced people generated income in an urban context characterized by high-intensity violence. This will be done through a case study on the IDP camps of THR and Wisma Atlit. The foremost conclusions that can be drawn from these two case studies is that a disproportionate large part of the male population lost their jobs in the private economy shortly after the outburst of the first violence. Among the women, one noticed an increase in their engagement in the informal petty trading, although this increase was unevenly spread between Christian Wisma Atlit and Muslim THR. Further elaborating on these findings, in the second part of this chapter, it will be illustrated how insecurity restructured food trade networks in Ambon. In a somewhat contradictory way, this posed an opportunity and a threat for the internally displaced being cut off from these food trade network and markets. On the one hand, vulnerability towards food insecurity increased as alternatives in urban agriculture in these overcrowded camps were nonexistent. On the other

¹ The outline of the first part of this article is based on: Adam, J. and Peilouw, L. (2007) 'Internal Displacement and Income Generation Strategies: A Case Study in Ambon', *Social Development Issues*, 30 (2): 78-90.

hand, there emerged some particular incentives for people that traditionally had been excluded from informal petty trading to take up a function in food retailing and generate an income through these activities.

4.1. Urban violence in Ambon

The recent communal conflict in Maluku has always had a strong urban character. It was in the inner town of Ambon that the symbolic ‘green light’ for the start of the violence was given after a fight ran out of hand on the 19th of January 1999. Until 2001, the town of Ambon remained a warzone as the religious fault lines and subsequent battle lines ran straight through the city. It was also in the inner city centre of Ambon that the last big riots of April/May 2004 took place. The communal violence in the city of Ambon thus had a longer endurance compared to most of the rural parts of the Moluccas. One of the explanations for this has to be sought in demographics. Many rural regions in Maluku were characterized by demographic imbalances between Christians and Muslims. After the respective religious minority was expelled, stability quickly returned. An obvious example is the Leihitu peninsula on Ambon island. This peninsula has always been Muslim dominated and after some small Christian enclaves were chased away in early 1999, this part of Ambon island remained relatively peaceful throughout the whole *kerusuhan*. The most notable exception on the Leihitu peninsula was the village of Waai where violence persisted for about one and a half year until the Waai

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community was expelled. The same happened in the city of Ambon where neither of the two religious groups had the capacity to chase the other one out. This observation confirms the remark made by John Sidel (2008: 53) that: ‘... displacement played a crucial role in the transformation, de-escalation, and effective termination of large-scale inter-religious violence’.

This urban character of the violence in Ambon is rather exceptional. In many conflict regions in the world, cities play a pivotal role but rarely as a battlefield where different factions fight each other for multiple years. In the majority of cases, cities are controlled by one of the warring parties or an international security force and the real battle lines are situated in more rural, far-away areas. As a consequence, cities become attraction poles for people living in these volatile rural areas.² In contrast, the town of Ambon witnessed a dramatic mass exodus due to the high levels of insecurity. I did not manage to obtain exact data about the exact number of killings or wounded in the city compared to more rural regions. However, the underlying population figures illustrate poignantly the urban character of the violence.³

² For instance, in the period of protracted warfare in eastern DRC, the town of Goma witnessed an average growth of 14% (Verhoeve 2004: 112).

³ These data are derived from different *Maluku Dalam Angka* (Maluku in Figures) books (1988, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2005, 2007). These statistical yearbooks are distributed by the *Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Maluku*.

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	<i>Absolute numbers</i>	<i>Population density</i>
1961	99142	267/km ²
1971	139704	389/km ²
1980	208898	582/km ²
1985	223823	623/km ²
1990	276955	734/km ²
1995	311974	827/km ²
2000	206210	547/km ²
2005	234421	622/km ²
2007	256222	680/km ²

Table 1: Population figures Ambon city

Studying these data, in particular the steep decline between 1995 and 2000 is remarkable. While in 1995, there still were 827 inhabitants per km² in the town of Ambon, in 2000, this had decreased to 547 inhabitants per km². It is clear that this decline is due to the eruption of violence in Ambon in the beginning of 1999, which caused a dramatic mass exodus out of the city. By 2007, population density was still lower compared to 1990, despite the fact that high-intensity violence was already over for about 5 to 6 years at that time. When we take a look at the population figures for the same period in the largely rural district of Maluku Tengah, a different picture emerges.⁴

⁴ Maluku Tengah is considered here as the old district including the districts of Buru, Seram Bagian Barat and Seram Bagian Timur which were recently divided from the old Maluku Tengah district. This means that for the years 2005 and 2007, the population figures for the current district of Maluku Tengah are somewhat lower than these data suggest.

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	<i>Absolute numbers</i>	<i>Population density</i>
1961	252928	9/km ²
1971	352460	12/km ²
1980	444006	15/km ²
1985	520735	18/km
1990	592675	20/km ²
1995	666870	23/km ²
2000	651114	23/km ²
2005	667784	23/km ²
2007	682788	24/km ²

Table 2: Population figures Maluku Tengah district

For this district, we notice how a small demographic decline can be noted between 1995 and 2000. Yet, this never reached the same level as was the case for the city of Ambon. This difference between urban Ambon and rural Maluku Tengah can also be derived from the subsequent diagram.

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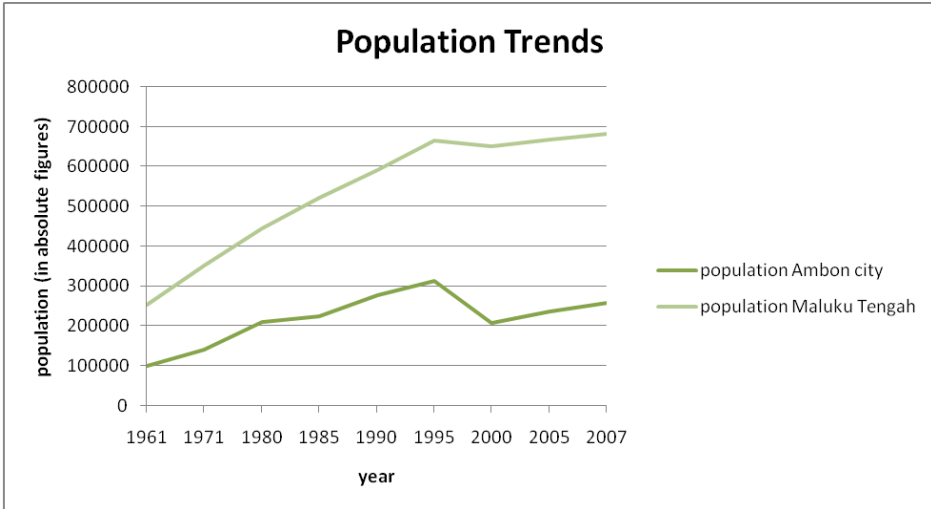


Diagram 1: Population figures Ambon city and Maluku Tengah

4.2. Methodologies for data collection

How did civil populations attempt to economically survive in this specific context of enduring and high-intensity urban warfare? As a concrete entry point to answer this broad question, research has been conducted in two IDP camps situated in the city of Ambon. More in particular, a comparative study was undertaken in the first three months of 2006 in order to see why and how income generation changed once the *kerusuhan* burst out in the beginning of 1999. The first camp of Wisma Atlit (Athlete's Home Stay) consisted of a Protestant community of around 200 households which before the conflict

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lived in the predominantly Muslim neighborhood of Batu Merah. For reasons of insecurity, this community was forced to flee to the Christian neighbourhood of Karpan (Karan Panjang) on the 23rd of February 1999, where they took refuge in an abandoned sports centre. This site was situated about two kilometres away from their original place of living. Of the 700 households that fled from Batu Merah, only some 200 families could settle in Karpan. Others arriving once the place was already packed, became dispersed all over the island. For the first two years, people simply lived in the government building and slept on the ground. From the end of 2001 onwards, people began to build small wooden cabins. Yet, living conditions remained uncomfortable. For instance, due to the small sizes of the cabins, there was not enough sleeping place for the whole household (in many cases also including grandparents). Therefore, there existed 'sleeping shifts' and in many of the cabins, there were constantly people sleeping, also in the daytime. Another problem encountered was the lack of privacy for a satisfying sexual life. In particular people who became married throughout the time of displacement could not claim their own personal cabin to live and were forced to stay in their parents place. Some of these newlyweds confirmed that this had a negative influence for their love life. In the end, this community lived in this camp for seven years until they were permanently relocated in April-May 2006 to a new place.

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Small living cabins in the IDP camp of Wisma Atlit (February 2006)



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The second camp that has been researched is the Muslim IDP camp of THR, situated near the harbour. The IDPs of this camp came from different parts of the city and the Moluccan archipelago. This resulted in an ethnically diversified IDP-community. This ethnic diversification was illustrated in the architectural development of the camp. Here also, people originally slept on the floor of a government building but when they finally began to build their cabins, they did this among ethnic lines. This resulted in a camp where 'ethnic enclaves' could be distinguished as the Bugis, Butonese, Ambonese Muslims and other ethnic groups all occupied their own quarter. The number of IDPs was at its peak between 1999 until 2002 and throughout the riots of April 2004. During these periods, THR accommodated approximately 600 households. From April 2006 onwards, the IDPs were moved to different relocation camps scattered all over the island. At the time of research, THR gave shelter to some 250 households as some of the IDPs were already relocated in a new and permanent place.

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Women and children passing their time in THR (February 2006)

The methodology used to investigate how and why income generation changed in these two settings once the *kerusuhan* started was twofold. In a first stage, interviews that fell in two categories were conducted: (1) introductory interviews with people who were closely involved in the organization of the camps, such as community leaders, religious leaders and NGO activists, and (2) general focus group discussions with the IDPs of both camps on diverse aspects of their internal displacement. These two kinds of interviews helped us get insight into the history of the camps and the most

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important problems and opportunities that arose throughout their displacement.

Household interviews were conducted in the second phase. A questionnaire was used to gather personal data and investigate two things: (1) how was income obtained by the household before and during the conflict, and (2) how large respondents' income was before and during the *kerusuhan*.⁵ When looking at the questionnaire, one will notice that the word *pekerjaan* (job) figures quite prominently. However, already after the first household interviews, it became clear that some people considered working in informal economies not as a job while this obviously is an important and relevant manner to generate income. Therefore, interviews were conducted as open as possible and started from the general question how many was obtained (*dapat uang*) in order to fulfil the household needs and the word *pekerjaan* has been left out as much as possible. The interviews were conducted with the wife and husband together. Despite the fact that the data were collected separately for men and women, preference was given not to ask people to leave the place as this would damage an atmosphere of informality and trust. When other friends and family were present, they were as much as possible involved in the interview. In the end, the discussions people sometimes had with each other proved to be an added value for the research.

⁵ See the annex for an example of this questionnaire. One will notice how questions about the aftermath of the conflict have also been included in the questionnaire. However, when processing the data, it was decided to leave this part out due to contrasting interpretations when the conflict ended.

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The respondents were selected at random with two important restrictions.⁶ I only interviewed people who already supported themselves before the conflict, and the interviews were only conducted in the evening time when most of the people were taking a rest. In total, 70 in-depth household interviews were conducted in the two IDP camps. The same household was sometimes interviewed two times to get additional information or double check the data. When people had difficulties indicating how much money they made with certain activities, the question just remained unanswered. Considering the rather limited sample that has been interviewed, the underlying data should be interpreted as figures that reflect some tendencies, rather than exact numbers. Although the questionnaires were focussed on collecting quantitative data, many time was spent to elaborate on more qualitative explanations. For instance, when men indicated they had no source of income whatsoever, additional questions were asked how they fell about this, how they spent their time when they had nothing to do... All this additional information was also noted down.

⁶ In the initial phase of the research, contacts were made with community leaders in the camp. These community leaders helped us to find our first respondents and also facilitated our focus group discussions. However, once people were used to see myself and my Ambonese colleague wandering around in the camp, households were selected at random. In this way, it was assured that the interviewees did not all belong to one and the same network but as many different voices as possible were heard in the camp (see also Jacobsen and Landau 2003 on the dangers of using snowball sampling approaches in refugee camps).

4.3. Impoverishment and a crisis of masculinity

As a starting point of the analysis, the strategies men and women used to obtain money have been classified into socio-professional categories. These categories were grouped along the following lines: *Pegawai Negeri* (Civil Servant): Public Sector; *Pegawai Swasta* (Private Servant), *Buruh Bangunan* (Construction Worker) and *Buruh Pelabuhan* (Dock Worker): Formal Private Sector; *Wiraswasta/Usaha Sendiri* (Self-Employed), *Pedagang di Pasar* (Trader at the Market): Petty Trade;⁷ *Petani* (Farmer) and *Nelayan* (Fisherman): Farmer-Fisherman, *Pembantu Rumah Tangga*: Housemaid, *Sopir* (driver: public bus, motorcycle and tricycle): Transport, and finally the category of No Income. Each of these categories was identified separately for men and women.⁸

⁷ Throughout the interviews, I noticed how the terms *pedagang di pasar* and *wiraswasta/usaha sendiri* were often closely interrelated. In case of uncertainties, the data have been double checked through additional questions.

⁸ To overcome the problem of diversification (one person having different sources of income generation at the same time), I identified the strategy that people indicated to be their most important source of income and placed this under one of the socio-professional groups. This method can be justified by the limited diversification people had. When we count the people who declared they had two or more different income-generation strategies, we cannot detect a great difference between the situations before and during the conflict. Before the violence broke out, 7 percent of our interviewees used two or more strategies, during the conflict this number was 6 percent.

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	Men		Women	
	Before	During	Before	During
Public Sector	7%	10%	2%	2%
Formal private sector	48%	27%	6%	2%
Petty Trade	15%	18%	36%	47%
Farmer-Fisherman	8%	2%	4%	0%
Housemaid	0%	0%	8%	14%
Transport	19%	14%	0%	0%
No Income	3%	29%	44%	35%

Table 3: Income generation before and during communal conflict

Table 3 thus shows the development of income generation for the IDPs of THR and Wisma Atlit, before and during the *kerusuhan*. As I already said, considering the limited sample of interviewees, it is important to only focus on those categories where sharp differences can be noticed. A first remarkable trend is a steep rise for the men in the category of ‘No Income’. While only 3% of the men declared they did not have any source of financial income before the conflict, this figure rose to 29%, or almost one-third of the whole male population, during the conflict. This picture is different for the women. Here we see a decline from 44% to 35% of the women having no source of income generation during the conflict.

The same tendency is reflected in the underlying table regarding household income. In the household interviews, it was asked to indicate how much

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money was made in one month. This was then grouped into four income categories.⁹

	Men		Women	
	Before	During	Before	During
No Income	2%	28%	45%	36%
< Rp. 500,000 (US\$55)	49%	45%	40%	58%
Rp. 500,000–1,000,000 (US\$110)	34%	25%	11%	6%
> Rp. 1,000,000	15%	2%	4%	0%

Table 4: Household Income

During the conflict, the women's relative contributions to the total household income rose considerably. However, among the two IDP communities, we notice an overall decline in the household income during the conflict. This can be deduced from this table 4, where the two highest income categories decrease sharply during the conflict among both men and women.¹⁰ The first significant conclusion, however, that emerges from these tables is that men were more vulnerable compared to women to losing their income once the

⁹ The minimal variation in the no-income data between table 3 and 4 can be explained by the fact that some people had no idea what they were earning. These people were not included in the sample.

¹⁰ It is important to bear in mind that after the fall of the New Order in 1998, the whole of Indonesia was confronted with a devaluation that resulted in a loss of purchasing power. This suggests that the impoverishment the IDPs were confronted with is even more problematic than these data suggest.

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kerusuhan started. Apart from the economic impacts, this had some important emotional consequences. Parts of the male population expressed feelings that can be defined as a real ‘crisis of masculinity’. This term indicates that traditional bases of power and identity of men in family units are being undermined by changes in the labour market (Chant 2004). This was clearly the case in both IDP camps as many men lost their classic role as the wage earner of the household. Different men stated they considered it as a stigma they could no longer fulfil the needs of their family. Other men declared they felt terribly bored as they had very little to do. This was tellingly summed up by one man who openly stated that ‘... all day long, I was only laying on the sacks of rice provided by the aid agencies’. Illustrative is also the fact that a football competition was set up in the camp of Wisma Atlit for the men, in order ‘to kill the time’. Yet, one should be careful not to make a simple stereotype of this crisis of masculinity. When interviewing NGO activists and community and religious leaders who were closely involved in the daily workings of the camps, a rather one-sided picture was often portrayed. In general, the conclusion put forward was that the women were the ones taking on responsibility and the men were the lazy ones. Throughout the interviews and discussions conducted, a much more complex and refined picture emerged. I had for instance some discussions in which women praised their husbands for taking up different activities within the household upon losing their employment and even declared that their relationship had drastically improved. None of the men interviewed considered the loss of income as a comfortable situation and many of them stressed the shame (*rasa malu*) they

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felt because of this. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that many women still did not have their own means of generating an income and were staying all day long in the camp. It appears however that this ‘empty time’ could be filled up easier with traditional household activities such as taking care of the children or cooking and cleaning.

An essential question that needs to be posed is why in particular men were vulnerable to losing their income once the conflict started. In order to answer this question, it is interesting to review table 3. In this table, we see that before the conflict, 48% of the men interviewed gained an income through the formal private economy. In contrast, only 6% of the women were employed in this sector. Once the conflict started, this number dropped from 48% to 27%. It thus looks as if in particular the formal private economy contracted due to the eruption of the violence. Because the majority of men were engaged in this sector, it was in particular the men who lost their primary source of income. Since women were traditionally less engaged in this sector, they were less affected by this economic downturn. This observation is confirmed through different, more general economic data. Apart from the number of direct killings and the high level of displacement, it is often forgotten that the communal violence in Ambon induced a steep economic decline. This was further aggravated by the overall financial crisis that raged throughout Indonesia at the time and caused a negative economic growth of 15,3% and an inflation rate of 45,4% in the years 1998 to 1999 (Booth 1999). Although the direct consequences were most gravely felt in urban Java and Sumatra, the

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combination of the conflict coupled with the financial crisis resulted in an economic recession that was sharper and more prolonged in the Moluccan province compared to other Indonesian provinces.¹¹ In most Indonesian provinces, real GRDP (*Gross Regional Domestic Product*) started to grow from the years 2000 – 2001 onwards and had already in the year 2000 resulted in a 4,8% overall economic growth in Indonesia (Dick, 2001). In Maluku on the other hand, the GRDP per capita fell by 20 % for the total period of 1998 – 2002. As a consequence, in 2002 one in three people were living below the poverty line and in terms of per capita GRDP, the province ranked 26th out of 30 Indonesian provinces. One of the reasons for this economic downfall was a sharp decline in industrial, manufacturing and construction activities, in particular those economic sectors a lot of men were engaged in. Between 1998 and 2002, the output of the manufacturing and industrial sector experienced a decline of 62% while construction decreased with 81%. Agriculture on the other hand declined only by 8%. Consequently, 40% of the entire workforce employed in the industrial and manufacturing sectors lost their job. This sharp economic downturn can also be evidenced by some of the economic data that were collected through own research in the statistical yearbooks of the province of Maluku (BPS Maluku 1997, 1999, 2000). For instance, the total amount of industrial production in the province of Maluku decreased from 619 422 tons in 1999 to 285 422 tons in 2000. The total number of people employed in mechanical, metal and chemical industries decreased from 5878 in 1997 to 3647 in 2000. For agricultural and forest

¹¹ The following economic data are based on Mawdsley et.al. (2005)

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industries, a similar picture emerges. While in 1997, 12960 people were employed in this sector, by 2000, this number had fallen to 6516. Within this last sector, in particular the shutting down of the big plywood factories in and around the city of Ambon was dramatic. Also many of the men in THR and Wisma Atlit had a job in these plywood factories. As these economic sectors were particularly affected by the recession, the municipality of Ambon - which has a more urbanized and industrialized character compared to the other peripheral, rural islands in Maluku - was amongst the hardest hit within the province of Maluku, experiencing a contraction of 33 per cent in real GRDP terms between 1998 and 2002. This economic downfall in Ambon is also evidenced by the economic performance of the harbour. Whilst in 1987 this harbour exported goods worth US\$ 315 million (totaling 87 % of all exports in the Moluccan province), in 2000 this number had reverted to US\$24 million or 27 % of all exports in the province.

4.4. Women and the informal economy

Studying how women adapted their income generation after the start of the conflict, a different picture emerges. Apart from a decrease in the number of women having no source of income after the start of the *kerusuhan*, a second important observation that needs to be made is that the share of women engaging in informal economies increased throughout the violence. Looking again at table 3, we see how before the conflict, 36% of the women engaged

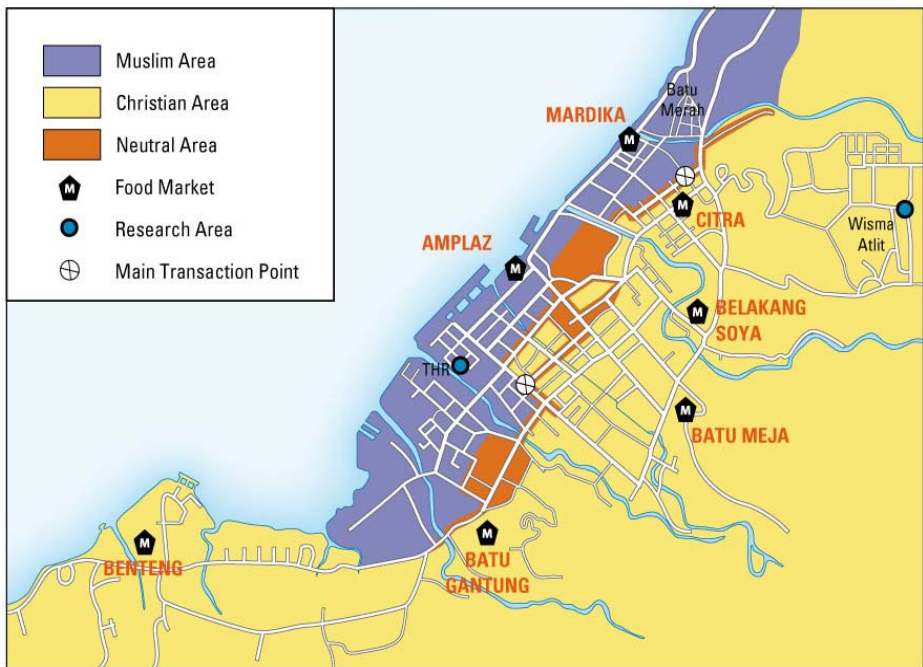
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in petty trading activities. Throughout the violence, this number rose to 47%. The same counts for women working as housemaid. While before the conflict, 8% of the women did some housemaid activities, during the conflict, this number rose to 14%.

Considering the small sample of households that were studied, this increase is not that obvious and did not confirm the widely held perception that women started engaging 'en masse' in the informal economy. Throughout preliminary discussions with civil society activists and journalists, a story that regularly featured concerned the economically proactive role women played during the conflict. In particular the fact that many women started engaging in the informal economy was constantly stressed. In addition, research conducted among women in informal fish selling on the island of Ambon throughout the *kerusuhan* tended to confirm this idea (Ongen s.d.). Yet, when compiling the data that came out of the questionnaires, it quickly appeared that this idea needed to be refined. Although it was confirmed that women increasingly engaged in the informal economy, this increase was not as spectacular as expected. Yet, when I decided to split up the data between the two different IDP camps, a much clearer picture emerged. In the Protestant camp of Wisma Atlit, only 19% of the women were involved in petty trade before the conflict, but this figure rose to 42% during the conflict. In the case of THR, some 45% of the women were involved in petty trade before the outbreak of violence, rising to 55% during the conflict. In other words, the rise in female petty traders is much more significant among the Christians of Wisma Atlit

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compared to Muslim THR. This difference corresponded with the observation that many more new petty markets were established in the Christian part of town compared to the Muslim part. As can be derived from the map below, the majority of the so-called *pasar kaget* - ‘accidental’ markets which came into being throughout the conflict - were situated in the Christian part of town.



Map: Petty markets in Ambon city (1999-2002)

Before the conflict, there were no petty markets in the Christian part of town and the markets at Citra, Batu Gantung, Batu Meja and Belakang Soja are all

examples of markets that sprang up throughout the *kerusuhan*. In the Muslim part of town, only in Amplaz (Ambon Plaza), new marketing activities were established because the walls of this shopping mall provided extra security. Apart from this one example, no extra markets were established in the Muslim part of town as the Mardika market already existed before the start of the conflict. In other words, insecurity brought about a fundamental reorganization of the marketing system in the town of Ambon and the incentives to engage in these marketing activities appeared higher in the Christian part of town.

4.5. Food insecurity in the town of Ambon

Arriving at these preliminary insights, I concluded my first fieldtrip to Ambon in 2006. It was then decided to elaborate further on this issue starting in early 2007. Additional research was conducted about the way food trade networks and food markets in the town of Ambon were reconfigured throughout the high-intensity violence and how IDPs were integrated in these networks. In particular, attention has focused on the distribution and selling of locally produced vegetables. As an entry point, further research was conducted among the women traders of Wisma Atlit, who by then were relocated to a new site. Using this group as a starting point, a more classic ethnographic/qualitative approach was employed in which other traders, consumers, transporters and food producers were interviewed.

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In order to reconstruct the alternative food trade networks that came into being throughout the *kerusuhan*, one should take the Mardika market as a starting point. Before the outbreak of the violence, this market served as the focal point for the distribution of fresh foods such as fish, meat and vegetables in the city of Ambon. These foods were imported as well as locally produced. The imported crops mainly came from the islands of Sulawesi and Java, were brought by ship to the harbour of Ambon and were then further distributed by middlemen to urban street merchants. The local vegetables were produced and sold, mainly by the ethnic Muslim Butonese community living on the island of Ambon and some of the surrounding islands. Their focus on the cultivation of vegetables instead of perennial, long-term crops goes back to the fact that the migrant Butonese community in Ambonese customary law, holds a secondary position (Benda Beckmann 1990). As a consequence, Butonese can only obtain insecure users' rights and therefore cultivate short-term crops such as vegetables and cassava that do not require a strong financial investment and are less risk-prone in case ownership over the land becomes contested. There existed two manners in which these vegetables were distributed at local markets. In the first way, middlemen bought the vegetables in bulk in the villages and further distributed the produce to local markets. This practice of middlemen is known in Ambon as *papelele*. For the farmers, this had the advantage that there was no need to invest in transport and they did not have to care in case part of the produce was not sold at the market. The disadvantage was that the price paid by the middlemen was considerably

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lower than the market price. These vegetables were then sold at local markets, often by urban Muslim residents of Butonese descent whom bought these products from the middlemen. In the second manner, farmers sold their produce directly at the market in Ambon.¹²

In the beginning of 1999, traditional modes of transport to the market of Mardika needed to be reorganized for reasons of insecurity. For instance, before the start of the conflict, much of the vegetables produced by the many Muslim Butonese settlements on the Leihitu part of the island were traditionally brought to the Mardika market over land. However, once the violence unfolded, the city of Ambon was no longer reachable by car from the Leihitu peninsula as the large Christian enclave of Passo needed to be passed. Therefore, new distribution networks were set up. One example is the way vegetables were brought over the mountains from the Leihitu peninsula to the village of Rumah Tiga, situated at the bay opposite from Ambon city. From Rumah Tiga, these vegetables were then transported by speedboat to Mardika. The biggest problem in terms of access however arose for the Christian population living in the city centre of Ambon. As can be seen on the map, very quickly after the outbursts of the first riots in the beginning of 1999, the

¹² This does not mean that the whole Mardika market was dominated by Muslim Butonese. There were also Christian and Muslim Ambonese involved in the production and selling of locally produced vegetables. This however was a minority compared to the large Butonese community. Although this is not a general rule, it looks as if the Muslim Bugis, who are also economic migrants from the neighbouring island of Sulawesi, were/are more involved in the selling of textiles, toys, CDs, DVDs, tools... and played a marginal function in food distribution.

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area where the Mardika market and the harbour was situated became a mono-religious Muslim zone that was no longer reachable for Christians. There were attempts to import food crops to Ambon through alternative harbours situated in Christian parts of the island. One example was in Gudang Arang. The problem however was that this harbour did not have any real infrastructure and could only be reached by small boats. Moreover, transportation between this harbour and the Christian part of town was dangerous and expensive. Another entry point where goods could be imported was at the harbour in Halong. The problem here was that his harbor was controlled by the TNI and the TNI had to be paid money if goods for civilians were imported. As a consequence, Christians - consisting of half of the urban population - became almost totally deprived of their traditional access to the producers and the distribution networks retailing food crops in town. Therefore, food insecurity in the Christian part of town increased dramatically.

In the camp of Wisma Atlit, this emerging food security took a particular form. Research conducted in 2006 had already indicated that throughout the conflict, there was an abundance of foods in this camp, in particular of rice, dried noodles and dried fish. This was also the case in THR. In this regard, the quote about the man laying all day long on sacks of rice is not only illustrative of an emerging crisis of masculinity but also demonstrates the abundance of staple food that was available in the camps. The primary reason for this profusion is that the people living in Wisma Atlit were assembled in a camp that possessed an official IDP status granted by the local government. Hence,

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these populations were considered primary target groups for the food aid agencies and their organization in a camp made them easily reachable and manageable.¹³ Yet, despite this abundance of what people refer to as '*makanan kering*' or dried foods, the IDPs pointed out that their immediate worry concerned their access to what they call fresh foods or '*makanan segar*'. Food insecurity was thus primarily about the access to fresh foods of high quality. Although not perfectly applicable in this context as cassava - which is considered as a staple food in Ambon - was not provided by the aid agencies, many IDPs referred to this need for fresh, high-quality foods with the expression '*makan casbi, sakit perut*'; eating cassava gives you a painful stomach.

Because research focused on the Wisma Atlit IDPs, I cannot give any definitive conclusions how this affected food security among the total Christian population in Ambon town. However, some tentative data seem to indicate that for the majority of Christian residents living in Ambon city throughout the *kerusuhan*, mere hunger was not considered the primary solicitude. Just like in the case of Wisma Atlit, people were primarily concerned about their access to fresh food. For instance, discussing issues of food access among urban Christian citizens, many people referred to their

¹³ This somewhat privileged treatment of camp IDPs in terms of food aid is also apparent in the tensions that arose between the IDPs and the surrounding host community. The surplus food aid was often sold below-cost prices at the local markets by the IDP camp population, thereby driving the local host population out of the market or taking away the incentives to start engaging in petty marketing activities.

very one-sided diet of *indomie* (dried noodles), which was distributed by aid agencies. Some of them have never wanted to eat *indomie* again since that period.

4.7. Alternative food trade networks

Food insecurity in the camp of Wisma Atlit thus concerned the access to fresh foods. Going through the literature on how people deal with rising food insecurity in an urban context, a first strategy urban residents in different parts of the world have employed is urban agriculture (see Maxwell 1999 on Kampala, Tinsley 2003 on Kenyan cities and Ashebir, Pasquini and Bihon 2007 on Mekelle-Ethiopia). This urban agriculture can both be used for means of subsistence or for selling food crops at local markets to increase income. Yet, as can be derived from the pictures above, space to start farming in the camp of Wisma Atlit was nonexistent. Therefore, these IDPs remained dependent on trade networks to obtain access to fresh foods. As a consequence, people were forced to set up alternative trade networks with the Muslim part of the population in the city centre at fixed transaction points, situated at the borderland between Muslim and Christian areas. These transactions came to be known as '*tangan ketiga*' or 'third hand transactions'.

A case in point were the women traders from Wisma Atlit. After their forced displacement late February 1999 to Karpan, among many of these women, the idea started to grow to engage in petty marketing activities in order to gain

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some additional financial income. Interestingly, throughout some informal meetings and discussions, these women decided to set up their own, independent food trade network. The (correct) analysis made by the women of Wisma Atlit was that food prices in the Christian part of town were extremely high because there were too many ‘in-betweens’ involved in the distribution of food. Therefore, the women traders of Wisma Atlit wanted to set up their own, independent trade network, hereby bypassing all sorts of middlemen (*perantara*) who were in control of these networks. Their ultimate aim was to sell at a cheaper price and make more profit for themselves at the same time. Central to this strategy were their contacts with Muslim friends in Batu Merah, in particular with Muslim traders who had traditionally always been involved in petty marketing activities in Mardika. In order to set up the trade network, contacts were made with friends and neighbors who were still living in Batu Merah. The transactions were then made under the auspices of the Indonesian military on the border between the Muslim and Christian parts of town, at a transaction point close to the market of Mardika (see map: Petty markets in Ambon city). This transaction point came to be known as Amans, due to the nearby hotel with the same name.¹⁴ Once the transactions were concluded between the Muslims of Batu Merah and the Protestants of Wisma Atlit, these fresh products were then immediately sold by the Protestant women at the nearby, newly established petty market near the Citra

¹⁴ As can be seen on the same map, a similar transaction point emerged near the Silo Church. In particular imported goods coming from the harbour were sold at this point. Women traders from Wisma Atlit were not involved in these transactions.

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warehouse. In a later stage, activities were shifted to a market in Belakang Soya.

Yet, within a few weeks, this independent trade network was prohibited by what was referred to as *koordinator* (coordinator) who started to intimidate the women traders. For instance, some of them were threatened to be beaten up if they would continue with their activities. Ultimately, the women traders were forced to buy the products from these coordinators. Much to my frustration, I have never succeeded to establish contacts with any of these coordinators and therefore, data remain patchy. Asking the women traders who these people were, it was told they were strong, young men, 'who looked like the TNI, had a special relationship with the TNI, but definitely were no TNI'. They were Christians and according to some, they had links with Christian armed groups operating in town, the so-called *akar rumput*. Yet, the only definitive conclusion that can be made from the women's accounts is that they had no idea who these people were and where they came from. They were however much detested for their actions. Apart from the fact that these coordinators extorted market activities for their own profit, another complaint was that they could no longer have any personal contact with their Muslim friends at the other side of the border.¹⁵ Yet, what is sure is that throughout the *kerusuhan*, there definitely existed networks whom obtained an almost total control over all the economic transactions that were made near the

¹⁵ The existence of these networks was also confirmed by other informants, but none of them could give me convincing data or contacts.

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Amans hotel and this allowed them to arbitrarily set prices. For instance, many of the women traders from Wisma Atlit indicated that the price of one *iklat* (bundle) of vegetables or fish could easily rise by 300 to 400% once these coordinators were in control of these distribution networks. Thus, through the establishment of a monopoly, these coordinators could ask for extremely high prices, hereby reaping the profits and pushing up the prices of food crops in the Christian areas. This example perfectly illustrates how in cases where people have no own means of production in situations of increasing food insecurity, people remain depending on trade networks distributing the necessary food. This dependence puts them in an extremely vulnerable position towards the people controlling these networks.

Apart from periods of extremely brutal violence as was the case at the end of 1999 during the so-called *natal berdarah*, these sorts of *tangan ketiga* systems could go on relatively easy. More difficulties however arose after the entrance of the Laskar Jihad in May 2000 who forbade any commercial transactions between Christian and Muslim. For instance, through the Laskar Jihad radio SPMM (*Suara Perjuangan Muslim Maluku* - Voice of the Moluccan Muslim Struggle), it was regularly broadcasted that economic transaction had to stop. Muslim businessmen who ignored this ban were in some cases beaten up or killed. Therefore, the distribution of products from the Muslim area to the Christian area had to happen in secrecy. One of the ways to cope with this insecurity was to use the protection of the Indonesian military and a lot of the transactions happened in the army barracks in and around the town of Ambon.

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Evidently, the army was paid good money to provide this protection. Another way to cope with this insecurity was the switching of small trucks or minivans with fresh foods or other sellable goods. This was particularly the case at the transaction point near the Silo church. A Muslim driver parked this truck as far as possible near the Christian border and a Christian driver then quickly took over the truck and drove to Christian territory. Arrangements about the price, quantity and quality of the products were already made beforehand through the phone. Obviously, this was fraught danger. Another way to cope with this problem for the Christian population was the buying of food and other items in Christian Passo. To reach Passo from Ambon city takes about a 20 minute drive in normal circumstances. However, throughout the conflict, it was impossible to cross Muslim Batu Merah and the Christians were forced to make an enormous detour through the mountains in order to arrive in Passo. Some of the people who made this trip, declared there was a high risk to be shot by snipers as they had to pass closely at the Muslim border. On the other hand, they also declared that the profits they made with these trips were high. As a consequence, the price of the products they brought from Passo was extremely expensive.

Throughout this period which lasted for about a year, commercial activities at the transaction point at Amans nearly came to a standstill and the majority of women traders in Wisma Atlit lost their primary source of financial income. Many remembered this period as extremely hard and insecure and their consumption of high-quality foods was limited. From the middle of 2001

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onwards, when the role of the Laskar Jihad was played out, commercial activities were gradually restored at the borderlands between Christian and Muslim areas. At the end of 2001, the Dutch priest C.J. Böhm made the following interesting remark in his daily notes (The situation in Ambon/Moluccas, Report No. 219, December 30, 2001): ‘A few days ago we happened to stroll about near the Amans Hotel at the border of the Muslim neighborhood of Batumerah and the Christian neighborhood of Mardika, Ambon. We could see several hundreds of people merchandising, disregarding to be either Christian or Muslim.’ Although the number of ‘several hundred’ is probably exaggerated, this quote illustrates how commercial activities at the Amans transaction point were largely restored after the Laskar Jihad left the city. This does not mean that the situation had returned to some sort of pre-conflict normality. By the end of 2001, people still did not dare to enter into each other’s area and the system of alternative food distribution networks as it came into being in 1999, remained intact. Also, many of the women of Wisma Atlit reengaged in these petty trading activities. This engagement lasted until 2003. From that year on, people gradually started reentering each other’s area hereby once again transforming food distribution networks and the incentives to engage in these networks. This issue will be the focus of chapter 7.

4.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to illustrate how displaced populations adapted their income generation in an urban context characterized by protracted, high-intensity communal warfare. Based on research conducted in one Christian and one Muslim IDP camp, situated in the inner city centre of Ambon, two obvious conclusion can be put forward. First, due to their traditional affinity with the private formal economy, men proved extremely vulnerable for losing their income once the high-intensity violence erupted as this private economy went through a deep contraction after the start of the conflict in 1999. Second, women increasingly engaged in informal economic activities after the start of the conflict, albeit this engagement was remarkably higher in the Christian camp of Wisma Atlit, compared to the Muslim camp of THR. This points to a remarkable contradiction. On the one hand, the Christian urban population became cut off from their traditional access to food due to insecurity. This dramatically increased food insecurity as there were no opportunities to switch to urban agriculture in the overpopulated camp of Wisma Atlit. This also largely applied to the urban Christian population as a whole in the inner city of Ambon. Christian urban residents in Ambon therefore remained dependent on trade networks for their food provision. Although food trade networks were reorganized to satisfy the needs of these isolated populations, opportunities emerged to monopolize and extort market transactions. On the other hand, due to this spatial reorganization of food trade networks, there emerged some particular economic incentives for people, such as the women

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from Wisma Atlit, who traditionally had been excluded from these activities in petty marketing to take up a function in food retailing and attempt to increase their income through these activities.

I am more indigenous than you are
Recognizing customary tenure in Ambon¹

In chapter 3, it was demonstrated how displacement stood central in a strategy to settle private disputes and access space in order to perform economic activities and can therefore not be understood as an accidental side product of the recent communal violence. Elaborating further on these findings, this chapter aims to touch upon one of the reasons why a large part of these forcibly migrated have been restrained to return home once this high-intensity conflict ended. The hypothesis put forward in this chapter is that an exclusivist interpretation of customary land tenure is one of the primary reasons why many IDPs could not return to the place they were living before the start of the *kerusuhan*. The exclusivist deployment of customary tenure - also called *adat* in the case of Ambon - to exclude non-indigenous communities from secure access to resources was already a feature that was apparent throughout the New Order. Since an *adat* law community is based on kinship and historical ties to a particular territory, populations considered as non-indigenous due to geographical mobility could only access land through insecure, informal users rights or formal property rights. *Adat* therefore has

¹ The outline of this chapter is based on the article 'I am more indigenous than you are. Recognizing customary tenure in post-conflict Ambon', *Development and Change* (under review)

always constituted an arena of power in which populations considered as non-indigenous to a fixed historical territory are pushed into an inferior legal position. In the meantime, the recent period of communal violence and the ensuing population movements have given some particular opportunities for the indigenous *adat* community to settle long-standing disputes with migrant communities. Central to this process is a move to start registering customary systems of land tenure in which all land in the province is considered traditional *adat* land where indigenous *adat* law communities are acknowledged as the legitimate owners. This recognition should therefore be interpreted as an attempt by parts of the indigenous, Ambonese community to legally confirm some of the forced expulsions that were brought about during the recent communal warfare.

5.1. Customary tenure and indigenouness in Indonesia and Ambon

Discussions about customary tenure in Indonesia are inextricably linked to *adat*. This concept embodies the many variations of the idea of the ‘local’ in the diverse Indonesian archipelago (Warren and McCarthy 2002) and can therefore be deployed for multiple purposes (Li 2000, 2007). On a macro level, *adat* can be characterized as a set of social expectations defining how an ideal society should look like (Biezeveld 2004, 2007; Davidson and Henley 2007; Li 2007; see also chapter 8). In a narrow sense, *adat* can be defined as customary land tenure or as Davidson and Henley (2007: 3) state, ‘a complex

of rights and obligations which ties together three things - history, land, and law - in a way that appears rather specific to Indonesia.’ Already throughout the nineties, *adat* was increasingly deployed in Indonesia within emancipatory struggles defending the rights of indigenous populations against massive, state-led, capitalist development projects such as dam constructions or forest conversions. The end of the New Order and the subsequent democratization of Indonesian society have further opened up the political space for all sorts of *adat* based NGOs. Illustrative was the establishment of the national organization AMAN (*Alliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*, Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago) in 1999. The overall objective of this organization is probably best summed up in the motto they used for their second national congress held in 2003: ‘To strengthen the position and role of indigenous peoples in order to realize justice and popular democracy in the era of regional autonomy’ (Acciaiolio 2007: 295). Central in this struggle stands the issue of land rights and more in particular customary land rights of populations considered as indigenous to a particular territory.

These objectives put forward by an organization like AMAN reflect a broader discourse in which customary land tenure is increasingly gaining popularity among several donors, NGOs and governments in the South to meet the needs of the rural poor and mediate conflicts between land users (Toulmin and Quan 2000, Peters 2004). Examples of countries that have witnessed a gradual recognition of customary land tenure in their recent history include Malawi (Peters and Kambewa 2007), Zimbabwe (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2008),

South Africa (Mathis 2007), Venezuela, Bolivia and parts of the Philippines (Hirtz 2003). This increasing popularity of the customary finds its origins in several development paradigms which all imply a move away from state led programs of formal, individual land titling. The first paradigm is centered around promoting and defending the ‘culture-specific’, ‘indigenous rights’ or the ‘traditional customs’. This cultural turn in development started to take root in the seventies when universal concepts such as class and state became increasingly criticized by parts of the traditional progressive left in the West and as a reaction, culture was put forward as an alternative development objective (Nederveen Pieterse 1995, Davidson and Henley 2007). Within this discourse, customary systems of land tenure are attributed collective and community-based solidarity mechanisms that operate according to non-market principles and come to serve as strongholds against predatory free-market systems based on individual titling. This view is particularly in vogue among many NGOs situated at the left-leaning side of the development continuum (Whitehead and Tsikata 2003). A second incentive for this growing popularity is the perception that customary tenure is culturally and ecologically embedded. Customary systems are deemed stable and secure because they are accepted among a majority of the population and are adapted to location-specific conditions (Deininger 2003). Therefore, customary tenure is considered an institution of resource management that provides high tenure security at a relatively low cost (Toulmin and Quan 2000, Platteau 2000, Fitzpatrick 2005).

Many of these characteristics ascribed to customary tenure such as the existence of multiple social security mechanisms are also present within Ambonese *adat*. A concrete, well-documented example is the cultivation of *sagu*. *Sagu* is a staple food derived from the *sagu* tree which on Ambon and some of the surrounding islands has traditionally always been used as an ex ante food security provision in times of crisis (*makanan krisis*, crisis food) (Brouwer 1998, Von Benda Beckmann 1990b). In general, this cultivation of *sagu* as a subsistence resource happened according to non-marketing principles and its exploitation as a marketable commodity has always been marginal (Brouwer 1998: 355). Ambonese *adat* is also considered a durable and ecologically embedded system of resource management due to the central role played by *sasi*. *Sasi* is commonly understood as a ritual protection of resources in which there are fixed periods in which it is forbidden to catch or harvest certain natural resources. The observance of these rules is done by the *tuan sasi* (*sasi* master). A closer and critical reading of this *sasi* reveals that these durable features are somewhat exaggerated (Von Benda Beckmann K. and F. and Brouwer 1995), despite this still being a commonly held assumption in Ambon today. This belief in the potential of local customary tenure to tackle rural poverty and ecological degradation is also shared by international and national NGOs in Ambon. A case in point is the Baileo network, funded by the Dutch NGO Oxfam Novib. This is a network of indigenous Moluccan community based organizations which already throughout the nineties aimed to preserve customary systems of resource management in the region.

Specific for the Ambon case is that this belief in *adat* has been linked up with the idea to revitalize *adat* as a set of social norms to reconcile a religiously fractured society (Bräuchler 2007). Throughout and after the recent inter-religious turmoil, multiple initiatives, debates and organizations have sprung that aimed to deploy *adat* as a tool for reconciliation and conflict prevention. Here we see how different meanings of *adat* have mutually enforced and influenced each other. In different instances, opinions about ‘*adat* as reconciliation’ have been linked to beliefs in *adat* as a durable, equitable and embedded institution of resource management. For instance, in the case of the Baileo network, since the beginning of the conflict in 1999, their ‘traditional’ support for *adat* has been linked up with a reconciliation discourse that considers local culture conditional to stop and prevent communal violence. Another example are those organizations which attempt to start registering local cultural practices, including customary land law, as this ‘local wisdom’ is considered helpful to prevent future conflicts. A typical example are the so-called ‘socio-anthropological codification’ exercises set up by the local UNDP office and the Pattimura University in which oral culture is registered with the aim to prevent further communal violence (Universitas Pattimura and Peace through Development, 2007).

5.2. *Adat* as an arena of power and struggle

Despite this belief in *adat* as the magic cure for the many ills that characterize Ambonese society, *adat* should also be seen as an arena of power and struggle which contains some exclusivist features. Due to interventions dating back to colonial times, *adat* has obtained a very territorial interpretation (Holleman 1923: 62-75). Utilising a strategy of territorialization in which people were forced to settle along the coast, the Dutch set up structures of indirect rule through the creation of the so-called *negeri* or ‘traditional’ law community consisting of ‘original’ settler clans.² This created a system in which the land within the borders of the *adat* village (*negeri*) land is controlled by the indigenous *adat* community. One can distinguish different socio-political control rights over property. First, the indigenous *adat* law community is composed of different indigenous land holding clan segments or *dati*. These clans have a non-written property right (*hak milik*) for their respective clan land (*tanah dati*). The Dutch legal anthropologist Holleman (1923:66) therefore describes this *dati* system (*stelsel*) as the ‘... linking up of fixed

² This observation warns not to perceive *adat* as a fixed set of pre-colonial legal arrangements that are the opposite of modern, statutory land law. What is currently understood as *adat* in Ambon is the outcome of interactions between local practices and colonial and post-colonial state interventions dating back to the 17th century. As a consequence, many of the socio-political concepts that are considered as traditional were shaped by the Dutch colonial regulation and have become ‘*adatised*’ (Von Benda Beckmann and Taale 1996: 42) throughout the centuries.

territories to certain groups of people...'.³ Apart from these clan lands, there also exist undifferentiated empty, wild land, located in the mountains (*tanah ewang*), yet still within the borders of the *adat* village. In many cases, this land is considered as some sort of backup for future generations. Apart from these two categories, there is also *tanah negeri* (village land) which is managed by the *bapak raja* (customary leader) but is under the control of the whole *adat* law community. When a *dati* has become extinct, the *dati* land converts into this collective village land. This can then be redistributed to the remaining clans.

It is thus one of the essential features within Ambonese *adat* that the village organization is based upon kinship ties and one has to belong to the indigenous *adat* law community to obtain ownership rights to land based on customary law (von Benda Beckmann 1990). Both the access to village land, clan land and undifferentiated land are reserved for the indigenous *adat* law community having a historical relationship with that particular *negeri*. People not possessing this genealogical relationship cannot claim these customary ties and are pushed into an inferior legal position. Entering a clan for people that do not belong to the indigenous community can only be done through marriage based on a patrilineal system or, only in very rare cases, through adoption. At best, migrants can receive a *hak pakai* (user right) after a sharecropping agreement with the owner of the land or have to buy land

³ Translation: '*Het datistelsel, dat de vastkoppeling is van vaste gronden aan bepaalde groepen van personen, ...*'

privately. What is considered as a migrant is thus contextual and depends on the territory where one is living. Generally speaking, one can say that this category consists of all people not cultivating or inhabiting land in the territory attributed to their own *adat* law community. A first large group are those people not native to Ambon such as the large Muslim Butonese communities that originate from the neighbouring island of Sulawesi, even though these communities already settled in Ambon for decades and the majority are born in Ambon. Also autochthonous Ambonese can only claim these customary ownership rights in their own *negeri*. Once they decide to live in another village, they are legally reduced to the status of a migrant. Yet, instances in which Ambonese decide to start farming in another village than their own is unusual and most of the intra-island migration only occurs to the city of Ambon where systems of formal, individual ownership are dominant. Therefore, the most important ethnic divide is the one between the autochthonous Ambonese and the large migrant communities. The category of indigenous Ambonese consists of Christians and Muslims. Technically speaking, also migrants can be of any religion. In reality however, the majority of these settler communities are Muslim migrants. In Christian *negeri*, an ethnic fault line therefore corresponds with a religious fault line.

5.3. Legal transformations at the national level

Since the end of the New Order, more space has been created at the national, Indonesian level to legally enforce customary land tenure. Traditionally, local cultural manifestations remained subordinate to ideals of unification, centralization and modernization in the post-colonial Indonesian state. This is particularly clear studying the first landmark national land legislation, the Basic Agrarian Law (BAL) from 1960. Although formally acknowledged in the Explanatory Memorandum of the BAL, *adat* always remained subordinate to centralized state interests (Fitzpatrick 2006, 2007). Of particular relevance was Article 3 which stated that all land in Indonesia was under the control of the state. This statement was taken to its extremes during the New Order when in 1967 the Basic Forestry Law placed some 65% of the total Indonesian landmass under the direct control of the state. Meanwhile, the BAL opened the door to arbitrary political decisions in which state supported development projects could take over land whenever they wanted, thereby neglecting the rights of local populations (Thornburn 2004, Warren and McCarthy 2002).

This explicit objective of a national legal unification has changed since the fall of Suharto in May 1998 and the ensuing *reformasi* has provided for more recognition of customary rights to land management. For instance, Law No. 5/1999 regarding the Guidelines for the Settlement of Communal Land Rights Issues stated the following with regards to customary tenure (Sakai 2002):

- communal land rights are recognized by customary law and are owned by a certain customary community over a certain territory

V: I am more indigenous than you are

- certain territories constitute the environment of community members to obtain the benefits of natural resources, including land
- there are still uninterrupted hereditary physical and spiritual relationships between the customary community and the relevant territory

Similarly, several features in Law No. 22/1999 regarding Regional Autonomy legally enforced customary rights to claim access to economic assets (Sakai 2002) and the 1999 Human Rights Act (Law No. 39/1999, art.6) noted that traditional rights to communal land deserve recognition and protection (Fitzpatrick 2007:131). The new draft Agrarian Resources Act of 2004 stipulates that customary law provides the basis for natural resource management in Indonesia (arts. 5,8) (Fitzpatrick 2007: 130). Also, Law 32/2004 on Regional Administration confirmed through art. 2003(3) that customary law communities and local traditional rights are only valid if they are confirmed in a Regional Regulation (Slaats e.a. 2009).

Discussing issues of land access with customary authorities in Ambon, it was apparent how well all these provisions were known and had given these authorities a renewed self-confidence to claim what they consider as their legitimate title. Therefore, these legal changes at the national level serve as important symbolic markers and an overall feeling - rightly or wrongly - exists that Jakarta is no longer opposing local cultural manifestations as was the case during the New Order. At a second level, these new provisions also

provided a legal space to start formalising customary resource management. According to the head of the legal team currently writing up the new land laws in Maluku, these changes at the national level force them to adapt land legislation at the provincial, district and municipal level to be in accordance with these new provisions. Furthermore, through Law No. 22 on Regional Government and Law No. 25 on the Fiscal Balance between the Centre and the Regions (Thornburn 2004) and Presidential Decision 34/2003 (Fitzpatrick 2007), part of the authority over land affairs has been transferred to the district and municipal level. As Daniel Fitzpatrick (2007 : 140) states : ‘... these new provisions have been seized upon by provinces and/or districts to assert control over land and resources within their territories.’ In many cases, local customary forms of land tenure gained increasing prominence in this process.

In contrast to the rosy picture of *adat* being about defending the rights of marginalized, indigenous populations and the promotion of local level democracy through customary systems of village governance, multiple case studies illustrate how *adat* has been deployed in a complex and extremely politicized manner in post-Suharto Indonesia. In many cases, this has not served the interests of suppressed, poor communities. Illustrative is the research conducted by John McCarthy (2004) in the forests of Central Kalimantan. In this case study, McCarthy describes how due to some of the legal transformations described above, traditional village leaders found themselves in a ‘profitable gate keeping role’ and colluded with large companies in order to grant concessions for timber exploitation (McCarthy,

2004:1211). In most cases, these actions by customary elites were diametrically opposed to the interest of the villagers, even if these villagers were part of the indigenous *adat* law community. In other regions in Indonesia, ethnic divisions between communities considered as indigenous versus communities considered as outsiders have sharpened considerably. Based on a case study in Central Sulawesi, Tania Murray Li (2007: 356) puts forward the conclusion that in struggles to access resources, there is an increasing tendency in which: 'communities that have an ancestral association with their current territory sometimes deploy the concept of *adat* when attempting to assert territorial sovereignty vis-à-vis migrants they classify as outsiders'. A similar conclusion is made by Keebet and Franz von Benda Beckmann (2004) in the case of Minangkabau, Sumatra. In this region, there are attempts to reinstate the '*nagari*' as a traditional *adat* law community, thereby fundamentally reshuffling the organization of the village government and the borders of the villages as they were formed throughout the New Order. Also these struggles provoked numerous tensions with populations that are classified as newcomers. In some extreme cases such as in West Kalimantan, discourses about indigenism and *adat* have invoked violent, ethnicized socio-political struggles in which '... indigenous peoples in the name of indigenism inflict violence on other civilians' (Davidson 2007: 225). These different examples illustrate how decentralization and the increasing importance of customary systems of resource management, in contrast to the common international discourse, led to fragmentation, intense competition

and profound legal uncertainty in which local elites often manipulate existing legislation for their own benefit.

This ethnicized deployment of *adat*, enforcing divisions between the indigenous *adat* law communities and communities labelled as newcomers or migrants, is also visible in Ambon and therefore reflects tendencies found in other regions in Indonesia. Yet, in the Ambon case, an important, extra factor are the massive population movements wrought about by the recent *kerusuhan*. This has created extraordinary opportunities for indigenous *adat* law communities to take over deserted lands, thereby blocking a process of return. A central feature in this process is the drawing up of new land legislations since 2005.

5.4. New land legislations in Ambon

A well educated, largely Protestant elite network has been pivotal in lobbying for and writing down these new legislations. This network is organized through the *Lembaga Kebudayaan Daerah Maluku* (LKDM, Organization for Moluccan Culture). The LKDM, established in the eighties, wishes to portray itself as a non-political organization with two overall objectives. A first aim is to promote Moluccan *adat* in a general way. For instance, already during the New Order, numerous booklets were published about local cultural manifestations such as styles of housing, clothing... in the different cultural

regions Maluku consists of. A second aim is to promote eco-tourism in Maluku and related features of Moluccan culture such as traditional dance, traditional food... (not coincidentally, the secretary of the LKDM is the head of the tourism department of Ambon city). At first sight, discussing *adat* with members of the LKDM, the interpretation of *adat* put forward seems rather innocent and harmless. Most members put this in an open and progressive discourse and start the interview by stressing the importance of *adat* in issues such as reconciliation, ecological preservation or tenure security. However, when asking some critical, more concrete questions about ethnic fault lines, resource management and population pressure, the tone of the interviews often (not always) changed radically. In many cases, it was stated that migrant communities needed to honour/respect (*menghormati*) the indigenous law communities. When asking what this vague concept of '*menghormati*' concretely meant, very quickly, some exclusivist, rather crude opinions could be heard. For instance, one prominent member literally stated that 'the Butonese have to adapt to Ambonese *adat* or leave the Moluccas', another one stated that 'the place is full and there is no more place for migrants'.

Importantly, many of the members of this organization are actively involved in a consultancy firm that is hired by the provincial government to write down new legislations regarding land access. This consultancy firm is named 'Lokollo & Partners' after retired Unpatti professor and indigenous law expert, John Lokollo, who is also the president of the LKDM. Both this consultancy firm and the LKDM have strong links with the local Pattimura

university as the majority of the consultants are Unpatti professors. There also exist strong links with the powerful Ambonese branch of the PDI-P, in particular with the incumbent PDI-P governor Karel Albert Ralahalu. For instance, John Lokollo, is one of the closest advisers of governor Ralahalu. The secretary of the LKDM is the interpreter of Ralahalu in meetings with foreign dignitaries. For many of the recent publications of the LKDM, Ralahalu has written the preface. Not coincidentally, when the PDI-P took hold of the provincial governor's office in 2003 through the election of Karel Albert Ralahalu, the LKDM started a second life. Throughout the *kerusuhan*, the activities of the LKDM came to a halt. However, from 2004, they were reinstated as a formal organization based on the *Surat Keputusan Gubernur Maluku, Nomor 1478, Tahun 2004* (Decision letter of the Governor of the Moluccas, Number 1478, Year 2004). In the same year, the consultancy firm 'Lokollo & Partners' was established. In 2005, the first legislations recognizing *adat* and *adat* law communities were implemented. Despite their positive stance towards *adat*, NGOs and other international organizations such as the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) remain largely excluded from this law making process. As some of the staff of the consultancy firm stated, they prefer to make the legislation on their own because the NGOs too often have an incorrect interpretation of *adat*. In one case, UNDP staff had already made a draft legislation for a couple of villages within the district of Seram Barat in which customary law was converted into formal state law. However, as there was not yet a general legislative framework for this district, the exercise was rather useless and the draft

legislation could not be implemented. Moreover, in private discussions it was stated by people of the consultancy firm, that the UNDP people did not have the capacity to draw up these sorts of legislations because they were no real experts in Moluccan *adat*. Although these sorts of quarrels may seem banal at first sight, they revealed a fundamentally contrasting interpretation regarding *adat*. The consultancy firm has a strict understanding of this process, openly stating that the main aim is to instate the *adat* community as the legitimate owners of all land in Maluku through the reconstruction of an *adat* that is as historically correct as possible (*adat yang benar*). The UNDP people on the other hand use a much more flexible - yet also very hazy - terminology such as '*aspirasi dulu*' (aspiration from the past). Organizations such as UNDP and the Baileo network also state that attempts should be made to attribute more secure ownership rights to migrants by lumping them together in a newly established land holding clan segment. For instance, this was a proposal the UNDP people made in their draft legislations for Seram Barat. Obviously, this 'incorrect' interpretation is vehemently opposed by the consultancy firm.

This exclusivist interpretation can already be encountered in the first Provincial Regulation (No.14/2005) about the reinstatement of the *negeri* as a unified *adat* law community in which the concept of the indigenous *negeri* is advocated to replace the *desa* as the foremost institution of village

governance.⁴ This legislation signifies a move away from the much contested Law No. 5 on Village Administration of 1979 in which a uniform system of local governance through the system of the Javanese *desa* was propagated. This Provincial Regulation remains rather vague and essentially states what sorts of requirements one has to fulfill to be entitled as an indigenous *adat* law community or to claim indigenous rights (*hak asal usul*). One requirement is having a historical relationship with a delineated territory (Pasal 5). Communities not fulfilling these requirements are lumped together in a so-called *negeri administratif* which falls under the village administration of the *negeri*.

In the district of Maluku Tengah, this Provincial Regulation is followed by a range of new legal frameworks (No.1 until No. 16) that were implemented in 2006. Legal frameworks for the other districts in the province of Maluku are expected soon but are already running considerably behind schedule due to the creation of multiple new districts in the last years.⁵ These laws for the district of Maluku Tengah entail more details about the particular systems of

⁴ Transcription: Peraturan Daerah Provinsi Maluku No. 14 (2005) '*Penetapan kembali negeri sebagai kesatuan masyarakat hukum adat dalam wilayah pemerintahan provinsi Maluku*'

⁵ This delay is a source of constant frustration for the people writing up the legislations as the objective was to implement the legislative frameworks for all districts in the province by 2010. Obviously, this initial target will not be made. Therefore, in 2008, the LKDM published a manifest entitled: '*Persiapan dan sosialisasi lomba cepat kembali ke negeri hukum adat*' (Preparation and socialization for a quick return to the *adat* law community)

local governance. Among the many new stipulations, it is of particular relevance to note that the different functions in the administration of the *negeri* have to be fulfilled by people that meet to the requirements of indigenusness (*Peraturan tentang cara pemilihan pengangkatan dan pemberhentian perangkat Negeri*). In the first chapter (*Pasal 1*), article g until j, it is already stated that members of the village government can solely consist of people having a genealogical lineage in their respective *negeri*. This implies that although the majority of the population in one *negeri* consists of migrants - as is sometimes the case - people are forced to elect the village leaders among the minority indigenous population. In a similar vein, the legislation explicitly states that all land and waterside shores of the *negeri* are owned by the indigenous *adat* community (*peraturan tentang negeri, Bab I, pasal 1/26*). This implies that people belonging to the *negeri administratif* cannot claim ownership rights based on *adat* law. For instance, in the same legal framework (*Bab II, pasal 4/1*), it is stated that the administrative *negeri* constitutes a law community that falls outside the genealogical law community which owns the borders of the land.⁶ A little further, it is stated that those territories that were traditionally known as *dusun* (sub-village) will obtain the status of a *negeri administratif* (*Bab II, pasal 9*).

Within this range of legislations, discussions over what should be delineated as customary land is absent as all land is considered customary *adat* land and

⁶ Transcription: '*Negeri administratif merupakan kesatuan masyarakat hukum diluar masyarakat hukum geneologis yang memiliki batas-batas wilayah*'

customary rights are linked to these fixed, historical territories. In cases where formal property rights are available, these are deemed a higher status compared to informal customary rights. Yet, in most rural areas, these formal property rights are hardly available as there has never been a serious attempt to start a process of formal, individual titling in the region.⁷ Another important aspect is the setting up of a team, '*Tim Penegasan Batas Wilayah Petuanan Negeri*', (Team to Define the Borders of the Village Land), to determine the borders between the different villages. This team will remain independent from the *negeri* itself (*peraturan tentang negeri, Bab XIII, pasal 62*) and will consist of historians and legal experts attempting to reconstruct the historical borders between the different villages through the consultation of archives. This ambitious and sensitive exercise is scheduled when legal frameworks will be implemented in the near future at the level of the *negeri*.

5.5. Population pressure, violence and the exclusivist tendencies within *adat*

How should we understand this registration of customary *adat* law in Ambon? First of all, it is important not to represent this as a radical break away from

⁷ This is one of the reasons why the implementation of a legal framework for the city district of Ambon is put to a halt at the moment. This team of legal experts finds it very hard to reconcile *adat* law with the dominance of individual statutory law in the city. They also admit that the features that can be encountered in the framework that has been implemented for the rural district of Maluku Tengah, cannot be blindly transferred to the city district of Ambon.

the New Order era. Already in the beginning of the seventies, it was noted how population pressure raised the value of land and led to increasing border disputes (Van Fraassen 1972: 82). This was, among other things, due to an explosion in the price of cloves in the seventies and a subsequent rise in the influx of Butonese migrant workers. As a consequence, competition for access to resources rose, regularly resulting in disputes which often took an ethnic turn due to the vague and non written agreements between the indigenous Ambonese and this growing migrant community. Already throughout the New Order, many of these disputes were concluded using customary *adat* law. Consequentially, non-indigenous communities were often excluded from secure access to natural resources or oral sharecropping agreements simply were broken, making *adat* into a 'jurisprudence of insurgency and oppression' (Von Benda Beckmann 1990). In this regard, the indigenous *adat* community already was powerful throughout the New Order, despite the fact that many heads of land holding clans (*kepala dati*) like to portray themselves as being oppressed by a ruthless, centralized, Java dominated state.

As I demonstrated in chapter 3, the quick escalation of the violence after the first riots in the town of Ambon in January 1999 was closely related to these simmering land conflicts and many of the violence conducted was intended to settle these disputes. This was particularly the case where religious and ethnic fault lines coincided such as in the eviction of the Muslim Butonese communities on the many Christian *negeri* on the Leitimur part of the island of Ambon. Cases in which Muslim Butonese settlements in Muslim villages

have been destroyed have not been noted, despite the often strained relations between these two communities. Once these migrant communities were forcibly displaced, the indigenous *adat* law communities - not necessarily involved in the violence itself - were granted exceptional opportunities to reinstate themselves as the traditional and legitimate owners of these abandoned lands. In this regard, the observation made in the beginning of the nineties by Franz von Benda Beckmann that ‘... the increasing land scarcity leads one to expect that the Ambonese will increasingly try to regain control over that land’ (Benda Beckmann, 1990: 249) has partly become true with the recent conflict, despite the overall religious logic of the violence.

These attempts to regain control over land have continued since the end of the conflict and *adat* was pivotal in this process. It is thus important to note the continuities that exist between the New Order, the period of the *kerusuhan* and the current phase. Increasing population pressure and conflict over land access were determining factors in the escalation of the communal conflict that lasted from 1999 until 2001. Many of the violent expulsions that were brought about by the conflict have been enforced through an active deployment of *adat*. In other words, the conflict presented opportunities to settle private disputes regarding resource management. Since the ending of the high-intensity violence, different opportunities were presented to legally enforce some of the populations movements brought about by the conflict. Although most displaced, non-indigenous communities already were restrained to return before 2005, the current registration of *adat* should be

interpreted against this background. It is apparent that little is mentioned about the many subtleties and different access rights that exist within Ambonese *adat*. For instance, nothing is said about *pusaka* (inheritance) rights or the difference between access rights to land and access rights to resources on the land. Although no legislations are yet implemented at the village level, the legal experts of the Consultancy firm drawing up the legislations confirmed they do not intend to define the borders of the different *dati*, *ewang* (empty) or collective *negeri* lands within the village.

At least at this stage, the majority of the legislations are about the ethnic distinction between the *adat* law communities and migrants communities and it looks as if there is little enthusiasm to touch upon divisions and distinctions within the *adat* law community. This was also confirmed by the head of the legal team making up these legal frameworks. It was literally stated that the primary aim of these legislations is to confirm the *adat* law communities as the legitimate owners of the land in Maluku, in particular as these *adat* law communities are threatened by a growing migrant community. On the other hand, there also exists an awareness that *adat* knows many variations among the different villages. Therefore, this legal team wanted to make sure not to impose a particular and very detailed interpretation of *adat* which is different to what people are accustomed. As a consequence, these legislations are still characterized by a high level of vagueness and it remains to be seen whether the different legislations at the village level will entail more details about different types of access rights within Ambonese *adat*.

On the other hand, although many of these legal frameworks are still ‘in the making’, there are already some tangible results due to these legal changes. The next paragraphs will demonstrate that the registration of customary tenure has further enforced the already powerful position of indigenous *adat* law communities as these written laws are actively utilized in formal courts and strategies of legal bluffing. As a consequence, indigenous *adat* law communities gain greater legal powers and displaced non-indigenous communities are restrained to return or reclaim property. This observation also challenges the often heard complaint that the short-term politics of the government are responsible for the permanent relocation of the many displaced, thereby enforcing the establishment of mono-religious zones in Ambon. This is only partly true. In the case of displaced, indigenous *adat* law communities such as in the villages of Waai, Poka or Rumah Tiga, the government managed to facilitate a program of return.⁸ This was not the case for displaced, non-indigenous communities.

5.6. The importance of written legislation

A first case in point is a large Protestant community that before 1999 lived in the area of Batu Merah, situated in the inner city of Ambon (see chapter 3 for more details). In this urban neighbourhood, the flight of this Protestant

⁸ An exception to this rule is the relocated, indigenous *adat* law community of Iha. I will discuss this case in chapter 6.

community in January 1999 enabled land holding clans to claim whole tracts of land that were considered ownership of the GPM and on which the majority of these Protestants lived. This provoked a legal battle between the GPM and these customary land holding clans from Batu Merah. The Moluccan Protestant Church tries to justify their ownership over the land based on colonial legislation that never became formalized in post-colonial Indonesia. Moreover, these documents proving the ownership rights of the GPM have all been lost, apparently because of the bombing of Ambon city in the second World War. The land holding clans on the other hand state that, historically, this has always been their land and was unlawfully taken away by the Dutch as they used the area to build a military camp for the KNIL. After the Dutch left, this land was then given to the GPM.⁹ At the time of research in 2007, the legal case was still pending. In the meantime, most of the houses that once belonged to the Protestants, were inhabited by new Muslim families who pay rent to these customary clans.¹⁰ As a consequence, the Protestant community is unable to return and cannot claim ownership over land and houses with the aim of selling this property. This is also the case for people who possess a formal certificate for their house and/or land.

⁹ This can be seen as a perfect example of what Daniel Fitzpatrick calls (2006: 100) 'semi-formal legal arrangements' in which these arrangements 'derive from local sources of State power and yet lack formal validity in the eyes of national law'

¹⁰ In February 2007, leaflets were handed out by a team of the GPM to these people with a request to not longer pay rent to the customary clans as the GPM is the legitimate owner of the land they are living on.

Discussing these issues with land holding clans in Batu Merah and the lawyers defending these clans, some remarkable observations can be made. First of all, already before the implementation of the first provincial legal framework about the reinstatement of the *adat* law community in 2005, *adat* was deployed as a tool of ethno-territorialization. From late 2002 onwards, there have been attempts by the displaced Protestant community to reclaim lost property. These attempts were immediately blocked by land holding clans from Batu Merah. Also the legal case against the GPM already began earlier than 2005. Yet, the new legislations in the province of Maluku are more than a change in policy rhetoric as they are actively deployed in formal legal battles through strategies of legal bluffing. The lawyers defending the customary clans from Batu Merah assured that the new provincial legal framework has tremendously enhanced their claims and they were self-confident that the legal dispute would now be settled in their advantage.¹¹ While before 2005, only references were made to national legislations that ascribe increasing importance to customary rights, now, this provincial legislative framework was constantly cited in their arguments to enhance the validity of the *adat* claims of the land holding clans. They also stated the wish that the legal framework for the city district of Ambon would be implemented soon as this would further enforce the already powerful position of customary land holding clans in this particular legal case. Remarkably, similar issues

¹¹ Formal documents which are used in this legal battle could not be obtained because the GPM and the land holding customary clans from Batu Merah considered the issue too 'sensitive' too share with a foreign researcher. All information therefore has been gathered by interviewing the different stakeholders in this conflict.

play for many Muslims who decided to leave the area throughout the period of high-intensity violence. Once these families and individuals decided to return, many were prohibited to do this by members of the Batu Merah customary clans, stating that this land was now their property and they were forced to pay rent for the land if they wanted to re-enter their house. In those cases where people were not in the possession of a formal certificate, some people decided to settle elsewhere or started to pay rent to these customary clans. In some other cases, people have started a legal case against some of these customary clans. Those Muslims that were in the possession of a formal certificate and threatened to start a legal case, could relatively easy return. This clearly indicates how formal ownership certificates still hold a greater legal power compared to customary *adat* rights. Yet, all over the island, many people lost formal ownership certificates throughout the violence due to sudden forced expulsions and massive destruction. In the meantime, the whole land register in the city of Ambon has been burned down in late April 2004.¹² This has dramatically increased the validity of customary arrangements as these came to replace these formal ownership awards. In particular in urban areas in the city of Ambon, such as Batu Merah, this is very clear.

These cases are a classic example of land access conflicts which arise due to far-reaching legal pluralism. Legal pluralism is understood here as ‘the

¹² This burning down of the *kadaster*, situated in Mardika not far from the border with Batu Merah where all sorts of legal issues regarding land access were pending, has given emergence many rumors and theories who was behind this destruction.

coexistence of two or more legal systems in the same social field or setting' (Griffiths, 1986:1). This case study on Batu Merah is an illustration of this legal pluralism as there exist different legal systems, in this case: *adat* versus semi-formal state legislation, through which different actors make their claims. In the end this has led to a situation of utmost legal complexity in which different parties try to claim access to land based on different legal systems. It should however also be noted that these attempts by customary land holding clans to take over land have further enforced divisions and conflicts at different levels between and within *adat* law communities. A first example is a new border conflict between the *negeri* of Batu Merah and the *negeri* of Christian Soya, situated north of Batu Merah. Throughout the *kerusuhan*, Christians who lived at this dangerous borderland have fled the area and since then, this land is claimed by a Batu Merah land holding clan as their *dati* land. This claim is vigorously denied by the village of Soya. Numerous stories could also be noted how since the ending of the *kerusuhan*, new conflicts have emerged between different Batu Merah clans about the respective borders of their *dati* land. For instance, different *adat* clans attempting to reclaim parts of the GPM land are having fierce discussions about the borders of their respective clan land. Moreover, numerous conflicts have erupted among different clan members within one and the same *dati* about the division of the respective clan among themselves. This second type of conflicts, which are currently omnipresent in urban Batu Merah, can be labeled as 'system-internal pluralism' (Von Benda-Beckmann 2002) in which different interpretations within one normative system are the reasons for

competing and conflicting claims.

Within legal battles which are fought outside formal state courts, these new legislations have also enforced the position of the indigenous *adat* law communities as they are applied in a strategy of legal bluffing. This could be observed in the Muslim villages of Hila and Kaitetu, situated in the district of Maluku Tengah on Ambon island. As I already explained in chapter 3, at the borderland between Hila and Kaitetu, a Protestant community that lived there for centuries was chased away by Muslim youth shortly after the outbreak of the first riots in the city of Ambon. Similar to the GPM issue in Batu Merah, the Protestants based their access to this land on semi-formal legislation based in colonial legal arrangements which never became formalized in post-colonial Indonesia. More specific, in 1948 the Dutch colonial authorities issued a 'Letter of Agreement between Hila Islam and Kaitetu about the boundary of the state land between these two negeri.'¹³ The letter states that the government land on which the Protestants lived is formally given to the Protestant community. When the Dutch left in 1949-1950, this Letter of Agreement was never transformed into formal legislation and the status by which the Protestants of Hila lived on their lands remained legally insecure. Therefore, this Protestant community tried to obtain a formal ownership certificate for this land one year before the outbreak of the violence. This attempt has been put a halt due to the expulsion of this Protestant community.

¹³ Transcription: '*Soerat perdjandjian antara Hila Islam dan Kaitetoo tentang sifat tanah goebernamen jang terdapat ditangah-tangah kadoea negeri itoe.*'

V: I am more indigenous than you are

Since then, a customary land holding clan from Hila has claimed this land as their traditional *adat* land. Part of the complexity of the problem is that a clan of Hila is now claiming land that formally belongs within the administrative boundaries of the neighbouring Muslim village of Tawiri. Consequently, not only the Protestants but also the village of Tawiri was strongly in favour of a return of the Protestant community as this would help them to retake the land that was now claimed by a clan from the neighbouring village. The placard underneath is one of the many which have been put on this deserted land.



Transcription: 'Strong Prohibition to perform any sort of activity on the *dati* land of Lating Nustapy' (Hila/Kaitetu, March 2007)

Written legislation at the national and regional levels which ascribes increasing importance to customary tenure has been actively studied and applied by this clan from Hila to prove their legitimate customary ownership over the land. As in many other cases on the island of Ambon, their knowledge of certain passages and regulations is remarkably elaborated. In this particular case however, the issue has never been brought to a formal court. According to this land holding clan, this is because the village of Tawiri and the Protestant community realize they will never be able to win the case as the power of *adat* is now omnipresent. In this process, these new legal frameworks are thus deployed in a strategy of legal bluffing not to bring the case to court. This is not only done to hinder return but also to prohibit the village of Tawiri and the Protestant community to reclaim any access rights on this piece of land. This could be observed in late 2007 when a delegation of the Protestant community paid a visit to this customary clan from Hila after rumors started to spread that their historical 18th century church would be rebuild after it was demolished in early 1999. As the church was being reconstructed with the aim of attracting tourists, they requested to share part of the expected income tourism would bring to their former place. As a response to their request, the customary leader to whom the visit was paid, stated that the Protestants are not entitled to claim a share of the profits as this was the traditional land of his clan to which the Christians had no rights. While the discussion dragged on for a while, this leader suddenly pulled out the new legislations on the district of Maluku Tengah that were implemented in 2006 and started citing different passages, in particular where it is stated

V: I am more indigenous than you are

that all the land of the *negeri* is owned by the indigenous *adat* community. The Protestant delegation, somewhat bedazzled by this move and impressed by the legal knowledge the customary leader displayed, left the house without an agreement.

5.7. Conclusion

Among many donors and NGOs, customary tenure is increasingly being perceived as an institution of resource management that is socially and ecologically embedded, thereby providing high levels of tenure security for large parts of the population and protecting the rights of marginalized populations. While this may be partly true, it is often neglected that land relations around customary holding are also embedded in unequal social relationships leading to processes of social competition and exclusion (Peters 2004). In particular, this is potentially the case in environments that are characterized by large-scale migration and increasing levels of legal pluralism. In these sorts of contexts, communities that are considered indigenous to a certain territory face particular opportunities to block processes of return and/or reclaiming of lost property by displaced communities not considered indigenous to those territories. As a consequence, some of the populations movements that are brought about by protracted violence are further sustained.

There have always been exclusivist tendencies within Ambonese *adat*, in particular as population pressure increased from the seventies onwards on the island. At the same time, *adat* always remained powerful in Ambon despite the centralist tendencies of the New Order as registrations of agricultural land under the BAL were hardly known and the majority of land transactions were regulated through customary land law (Benda Beckmann 1990b). As a consequence, *adat* often turned into a tool of oppression against a growing migrant community by denying them a secure access to resources. The current deployment of *adat* as a tool of ethno-territorialisation should therefore be understood as the continuation of processes that already were playing during the New Order. At the same time, due to the recent *kerusuhan*, some very particular opportunities were presented to the indigenous *adat* law communities to regain access to land and other resources. Despite the increasing popularity of *adat* as a means to reconcile a religiously fractured society, *adat* has also been deployed to block the return or the reclaiming of lost property of displaced, non-indigenous communities. Pivotal in this process is the conversion of customary law into formal law. At this moment only the province of Maluku and the district of Maluku Tengah have an official legal framework but others are expected to follow soon. In these legislations, it is required to have a historical relationship with a delineated territory in order to be entitled as an *adat* law community. These *adat* law communities own all land and waterside shores of their respective village or *negeri*. Communities not fulfilling the requirements to be entitled as an *adat* law community are lumped together in a so-called *negeri administratif* which

falls under the village administration of the *negeri*. Quite worryingly, the whole province of Maluku is considered as *adat* land that is genealogically linked with a certain *adat* law community.

Although still in its initial phase, the first signs indicate that these new laws have enforced the already powerful position of the indigenous Ambonese. Written documents of all sorts have always been used as evidence (*bukti*) in land disputes in Ambon and are therefore of uttermost importance (Von Benda Beckmann F. and K., 1994, Von Benda Beckmann 2005). This is also the case with these new legislations which are actively studied and applied as tangible proof in everyday land disputes following a protracted communal conflict, both in formal legal battles and informal strategies of legal bluffing. As a result, recognizing customary tenure proofs to be a disputable mechanism of solving problems of land insecurity in contexts marked by massive population movements and increasing land scarcity.

VI

Relocation and access to land

Hujan batu di tanah orang tidak sama dengan hujan batu di tanah sendiri

Having trouble on another man's land is not the same as having trouble on your own land (Ambonese saying)

Because many communities were restrained from returning home after the ending of the *kerusuhan*, they have been relocated to new sites dispersed all over the island of Ambon. An essential question concerns how access to land is obtained in these new relocation sites. It is generally agreed upon that land constitutes a major issue to be tackled in any sustainable strategy of reconstruction and reconciliation after a period of high-intensity conflict (Lewis 2004, Zevenbergen and Van der Molen 2004). Often, land lies at the root of protracted violence as certain groups are excluded from sustainable and equitable land access (Unruh 2004). In other cases, such as Ambon, land becomes the subject of dispute during ongoing warfare. Moreover, due to population movements, changes in the institutional arrangements controlling access to resources, and the destruction of property, many regions recovering from warfare are characterized by fierce tensions over land access (Du Plessis 2003). Secure access to land is also of major economic importance for a

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majority of the population in many places in the South, in particular in environments characterized by long-term conflict and subsequent economic decline.

Despite all these different reasons pointing to the importance of equitable and secure land access in any durable peace building strategy, land access for relocated communities in Ambon is characterized by high levels of legal insecurity. These relocated communities are by definition not entitled to access land based on customary ownership rights as they do not possess a historical relationship with the territory they have been relocated to. Moreover, these populations do not have the financial means to buy formal ownership certificates and the government provided no support whatsoever to them gaining access to arable land. Therefore, these relocated communities are forced to access land based on insecure users' rights. Although this counts for all the relocation sites discussed in this chapter, the impact this has on aspects of social vulnerability is diverse due to two factors: i) the legal status of these communities prior to their forced expulsion, ii) the self-settled or forced nature of their relocation. The overall conclusion however is that relocation and subsequent tenure insecurity have a negative economic impact and these communities are pushed into waged labour or informal economies outside agriculture.

6.1. Access to land for housing purposes

In order to better understand how access to land is negotiated after relocation in Ambon, it is necessary to distinguish between arable land and land for housing purposes. In all of the four relocation sites studied, Kayu Tiga, Kate-Kate, Hila-Tanah Putih and Iha-Liang, access to land for housing purposes has been provided by the government.¹ Every relocated household also had the right to one house. These houses were of low quality and sometimes already had cracks in the walls and the floor before people started living there. General facilities such as a kitchen or a toilet were not provided. Communal buildings such as a community centre or a church/mosque had to be built and paid by the community. There were no open spaces provided for people to play sports or hang out. This is illustrated by the picture below, which was taken in February 2006, a couple of months before the people living in Wisma Altlit were forced to move to Kayu Tiga.

¹ As I will explain later in this chapter, only in the case of Iha-Liang, are people still waiting for the formal certificates for this land.

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The relocation site of Kayu Tiga (February 2006)

As can be derived from this picture, what is essentially provided by the government are four walls, a roof, a floor and some land for housing purposes. In all the relocation sites I visited, people expressed deep discontent about the quality of the houses and the fact they needed to invest their own financial means to build extra facilities such as a washbasin, a kitchen, a toilet, or a shelter. A widely shared belief existed that corruption, due to which large amounts of the reconstruction funds coming from Jakarta ended up in the pockets of politicians and real estate agents, was to be blamed for the low quality of the houses.² In this case of Kayu Tiga, people also feared mud

² This issue of corruption regarding reconstruction funds aimed at displaced and relocated populations has also been noted for North Maluku (Duncan 2008: 212-215), Poso (Aragon 2004, 2008) and West Kalimantan (Davidson 2008b: 79-80). Although these allegations were also omnipresent for the Ambon case, I never managed to obtain concrete, material evidence proving the misappropriations of refugee funds.

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slides due to the location of the camp along a steep hill. For some people, this was even an incentive to try to sell their house and live at another place.

The picture underneath was taken two and a half years later, standing at the other side of the hill. As can be derived from this picture, all sorts of extra facilities have been added to the houses such as a small front yard and a shelter. In many cases, people also built an extra, adjacent room at the back. The streets have been asphalted (by the government) and new buildings have been added. For instance, the larger buildings with the red roofs are community centres which serve all sorts of purposes. The picture itself was taken from the scaffolding of a church people were building at that time.



The relocation site of Kayu Tiga (July 2008)

6.2. Tenure insecurity

Despite the fact that money had to be spent in order to make the houses provided by the government liveable, the biggest worry for these relocated communities concerned their access to arable land. This land had to be obtained without any outside help or financial assistance from the government. For a camp such as Kayu Tiga, which is situated in the close vicinity of the town of Ambon, this posed no immediate problem. Before, during and after their displacement, their economic life has been entirely focused on the city of Ambon and access to arable land has always been of minor importance. The only cultivation of crops occurred on so-called '*tanah kintal*' (garden land around the house). As can be derived from the picture above, the size of these gardens was extremely small and the crops were solely destined for own consumption. For relocation sites in rural or semi-rural areas such as Kate-Kate, Hila-Tanah Putih and Iha-Liang, access to arable land was a pressing concern. For this reason, I will only focus on these three cases in this chapter.

By definition, relocated populations in Ambon are not entitled to access land, based on customary ownership rights as they do not possess a genealogical relationship with the territory they have migrated to. Moreover, the purchasing of formal state certificates was too expensive for the majority of people. As a consequence, arable land could only be accessed through users' rights. Considering these rights are based on oral agreements, the nature of

these rights is insecure. For the Muslim Butonese community of Eerie which relocated to the camp of Kate-Kate, the insecure nature of the arrangements to access arable land was nothing new as their legal status prior to their flight was already inferior. This community traditionally made a living through oral sharecropping arrangements on land that belonged to the Christian *adat* community of Eerie. This village hosted five Butonese settlements that have all been wiped out during the conflict. Due to their non-Moluccan migrant status, they were not allowed to access land based on ownership rights and no arable land was bought with state certificates. In 1999 they were expelled from Eerie like so many other Butonese settlements on the Christian-dominated Leitimur part of Ambon island. They spent 7 years in the IDP camp of THR after which they were relocated to Kate-Kate in 2006. This camp, consisting of some 240 households, is a collection of diverse Muslim communities that all ended up on this one relocation site. About 75% of them are ethnic Butonese.

This story differs for those communities that before 1999 could access land through more secure rights. A clear case in point are the Protestants whom lived in Hila/Kaitetu. In 2002, after living three years in an IDP camp, a decision was made by this Protestant community to relocate to Tawiri after an agreement was reached with a clan head in Tawiri, named Lesinus Tuhulero. After a request by the Protestants of Hila/Kaitetu, this clan head decided to rent out some lots of his land for free. The only condition was that no perennial crops would be cultivated as this would be considered an attempt to

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permanently take over the land.³ Although this land was full of stones and situated on far away, hilly terrain; this community decided to take up this opportunity. Land for housing and houses were bought by the government just next to a place where a Butonese community was settled. The certificates were obtained on the 31st of January, 2006.



Ceremony celebrating the handing over of the land certificates, January 31st 2006, Hila-Tanah Putih

³ When asking for the reasons behind doing this, this person answered that he felt pity for this expelled community and he considered it his religious duty to help his Christian *saudara* (brothers) in times of need. Out of gratitude for the free cultivation of this land, a small part of the harvest is always handed over to the Tuhulero clan.

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*Ceremony celebrating the handing over of the land certificates, January 31st
2006, Hila-Tanah Putih*

The biggest problem this community faced was that the land provided by the Tuhulero clan was not sufficient for the whole community to make a living through farming. As a consequence, many households went searching for sharecropping agreements with other clans in Tawiri and villages further away. Examples are rife where these oral agreements have been broken and in which the indigenous host community claimed the whole harvest once the crops were ripe and ready to sell. In other cases, these sharecropping agreements have been broken after one or two years when the land was cleared of wild plants. The Tanah Putih community finds itself with no legal means with which to fight these sorts of arbitrary and opportunistic decisions. In many interviews, it was stressed that this far-reaching tenure insecurity is a

new factor in their life since their relocation and added to an overall feeling of uncertainty and stress which did not exist in Hila/Kaitetu.

Another example of the legal uncertainty these relocated populations were confronted with is faced by the community of Iha-Liang. This Muslim community lived on the neighbouring island of Saparua in the village of Iha. After multiple attacks by surrounding Christian villages, this community was evacuated by the Indonesian army in September 2000. In 2002, this community split up with one part consisting of some 115 households deciding to relocate in 2002 in Liang, on the island of Ambon, after an agreement was reached to cultivate land through a 50/50 sharecropping agreement.⁴ This arable land both concerned *tanah negeri* from Liang and *tanah dati*. Just like in the case of Tanah Putih, the government was responsible for the provision of the houses and the land for the houses. At the time of my last visits to this community at the end of 2007, the formal ownership awards for this land were not yet delivered, causing anger and anxiety. The reason for this delay was a conflict between one *dati*, named Lesi, from Liang claiming this was their clan land and the *bapak raja* from Liang claiming this was *tanah negeri*, which is by definition managed by the *bapak raja*. While this tension was already slumbering for a long time, this conflict has intensified since the relocation of the Iha community as both parties want to receive the money from the government for this piece of land. At the time when the research was

⁴ The other part followed their customary leader to the village of Sepa in Seram where land could be accessed through a genealogical relationship between this *bapak raja* and the community of Sepa.

done, the Iha community had a *surat hiba* (letter of donation) from the *bapak raja*, thereby implicitly recognizing this land as *tanah negeri*.

Interestingly, this site is populated by an indigenous *adat* community, meaning that these people possessed a genealogical relationship with the territory they were living on, prior to them fleeing. At first sight, this seems contradictory to the hypothesis explored in chapter 5 about the exclusive deployment of customary tenure, which restrained non-indigenous communities to return home, in contrast to indigenous communities. However, this community from Iha is able to go home but made a decision to settle in Liang, at least for the moment being (see chapter 8). Visiting their village in Iha, it is remarkable that despite the total destruction of all buildings, their land is left untouched and no signs have been put up trying to claim this vacant land. The neighbouring villages of Ihamahu and Nollot still consider this land as the property of the people of Iha and have so far made no attempts to take over the land (Pattinasarany and Vermeulen 2009).



The deserted lands and houses of Iha on Saparua (November 2007)

The reasons this community does not wish to return to Iha are twofold. First, traumas about the violent clashes with neighbouring Christian villages are still alive and many people expressed a deep anxiety about visiting their village in Saparua. Adding to this fear is the fact that they are a small Muslim village in a majority Christian area. Second, access to arable land in Iha was extremely limited and their relocation to Liang has enabled them to access more arable land. In this sense, the number of people engaging in agricultural activities has increased. Although I have no conclusive quantitative data on this issue, many men I interviewed declared that in Iha on Saparua, they worked full-time as ‘*tukang*’ (artisan), in particular as ironsmiths. Since their relocation to Iha-Liang, many of these people have partly become engaged in agricultural activities. Access to other facilities such as education and markets are also

considered to be better, compared with their life on Saparua. In the meanwhile, there is a cynical twist to their relocation. As has been described in chapter 3, the border between Liang and Waai has always been contested between these two villages and heavy fighting occurred in this border zone between 1999 and 2001. Due to the contested nature of this border land, Liang villagers prefer not to cultivate own crops in this contested area. This is definitely the case for perennial crops which require a serious financial investment and take years before they bear fruit. Moreover, it is feared that the planting of perennial crops would result in renewed tensions as this could be considered by the Waai people as an attempt to permanently occupy this area. Therefore, preference is given to allowing settler communities to cultivate these lands through sharecropping agreements. This is not only an easy way to gain some income from these lands but is also an indirect attempt to occupy and claim these borderlands. Although nobody I spoke to in Liang or Iha-Liang ever stated it in this way, this was definitely felt like this among the people of Waai. Interestingly, the *bapak sekretaris* of Iha-Liang confided me that they were approached a couple of times by people from Waai who proposed that they could cultivate their crops for free if they acknowledged a *dati* from Waai as the legitimate owners over the land. This proposal has been refused. Interestingly, this case is comparable with the fate of the community of Hila-Tanah Putih, albeit in a contrary way. In the case of Hila-Tahah Putih, return became a strategic aspect in a border dispute between the villages of Hila and Kaitetu, while for Iha-Liang, it was their relocation which became part of the border dispute between Liang and Waai.

The people from Iha/Liang are aware of the insecure nature of their lands for housing and agriculture. The tensions within the village of Liang over their land for housing purposes creates sorrow and stress although they are not concerned by imminent expulsion since they already have a *surat hiba* for this land. Regarding their access to arable land, they are confronted with different layers of tenure insecurity which are more far-reaching. The overall ownership over these lands is contested by two rivaling villages and the access rights they have on this land take the form of insecure, oral sharecropping agreements. This legal insecurity creates deep concern. Many people stated that they felt as if working and living on somebody else's land inevitably tends to provoke conflict between and within communities. As a consequence, some people in Iha/Liang decided not to invest in the land as they were afraid they could be kicked off it any time. Although the cultivation of short-term crops does not require a strong financial investment, it requires a lot of labour to make the land ready for agriculture as all the wild plants need to be cut and the land needs to be cleared of stones. Overall, this enforced the opinion that one day, it would be better for them to return to Iha on Saparua where ownership is more secure.

6.3. Self-settled versus forced relocation

How did insecure access rights to arable land affect social vulnerability among these three relocated communities?⁵ Despite the similar legal status among the different relocation sites, socio-economic differences between these sites were huge. These differences can be traced back to two important factors. The first factor that needs to be reckoned with in explaining the remarkable contrasts in terms of social vulnerability is the difference between self-settled and forced relocation. Normally, self-settlement is used for urban migrants not living in delineated camps and being devoid of humanitarian aid (Jacobsen 2005). The interpretation of this term for the Ambon case is slightly different. I use this term to make a distinction between those communities who went looking on their own for a relocation site and those communities whose relocation was completely stipulated by a government plan. The communities from Iha and Hila/Kaitetu had already early in their displacement taken the initiative to search for land on their own. In both communities, it was acknowledged that they could not continue living in temporary IDP camps, and a return to their former village was considered impossible in the near future. Therefore, delegations were sent out in search of

⁵ In order to answer this question, a combination of in-depth qualitative household interviews and focus group discussions has been used. Over the three sites, about 40 household interviews and 8 focus group discussions were conducted. Unfortunately, these focus group discussions could not be conducted in Iha-Liang as I could not obtain the permission of the *bapak sekretaris* for doing this. I will therefore focus my analysis on a comparison between the sites of Hila-Tanah Putih and Kate-Kate.

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land. Although the access rights for these lands are insecure, at least there is some land which can be cultivated. These initiatives were never taken among the Eerie Butonese in Kate-Kate. This community stayed as long as possible in the IDP camp of THR until they were forced to relocate to the camp of Kate-Kate in 2006. As the government did not care about access to arable land and the camp happened to be situated in an overpopulated area along the important road linking the airport with the town of Ambon, access to land is almost non-existent in this camp. In the whole of the camp, there were a couple of households which rented land owned by the TNI. Some other households managed to access land through a Butonese settlement (Air Tinggalam) that was situated higher up in the mountains. People working as ad-hoc agricultural labourers during the clove harvest were noted, albeit a small number. Among the community of Eerie at least, there was nobody working as an agricultural labourer. What is however specific to this community is that due to their location at the side of the camp, they illegally squatted land owned by a private company. This land was a small and hilly part, left over from the original land that was not sold to the government with the aim of building the relocation camp of Kate-Kate because it was not suitable for housing. Out of a total of 35 households, 7 households cultivated this land in the first half of 2007. The nature of their access rights was, through any normative framework, illegal and the people could only hope that this company would not notice they were farming cassava on parts of their land. When I visited the community once again in October and November 2007, only one household was cultivating on this land as representatives of

the company had warned these people to stop their activities. Apart from this illegal squatting, no other arable land was accessed.

This restrained land access increased the social vulnerability of this Butonese community. Before their forced eviction, all households made a living through farming. Since their relocation, everybody has been forced to look for alternative income generation outside agriculture. However, as will be illustrated in the next chapter, the informal economy in urban and peri-urban regions on the island of Ambon is already overcrowded. Moreover, the majority of the private companies which left Ambon at the start of the *kerusuhan* have not yet returned. It is therefore extremely hard to find a job outside of agriculture for these people. This was already painfully illustrated in one of my first visits to the camp. Waiting on an appointment, I started talking to a man who was carrying out all sorts of reconstruction works on his house. When asked why he wanted to improve his house, the man responded that the prime reason for doing all this work was mere boredom as he had nothing to do and could not find a job. This problem of boredom was regularly mentioned in discussions in this camp and was remarkably different with all of the other relocation camps I visited. Conducting focus group discussions with women on their daily activities; household activities such as cooking, cleaning and taking care of the children ranked as the top three. Among the few productive economic activities noted were the selling of dried food, soft drinks and flowers or door to door selling of pottery within the camp. The majority of the women, however, were not involved in income

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generation whatsoever. As one women stated: 'Because there is no land to cultivate, we have nothing to sell'. The picture for the men was slightly different. The biggest sources of income were the many public and private reconstruction projects that have blossomed since the end of the conflict. These jobs are temporary and it could happen that men would go without a job for months. Moreover, it can be expected that this boom in reconstruction projects will someday come to an end. Nevertheless, these sorts of jobs increased the mobility of many men. Whilst before 1999, the majority of men were involved in farming activities within the borders of the village territory on a daily basis, this is no longer the case since their relocation. In most of the cases, these new jobs are ad hoc, insecure and situated outside the borders of the village land. Apart from these jobs, some men attempted to gain an income as motorcycle taxi drivers at the entrance of the camp. However, as could be easily observed, there were hardly any customers and essentially, these men were hanging out all day long to pass the time, as they admitted themselves.

Some similar dynamics were noted in the camp of Hila-Tanah Putih, albeit in a less radical way. Although there was more arable land compared to Kate-Kate, people were also forced to increasingly look for jobs outside agriculture. Just like in Kate-Kate, many men were engaged in private and public infrastructure reconstruction projects. In the case of public works, men were often away for many weeks of road construction work on peripheral islands. A simple count on a random weekday in November 2007 revealed that in

Hila-Tanah Putih, 35 adult men were away for jobs in construction, for at least one week or more. This was about one third of the whole active male population. When men were away for a long time, farming activities were taken over by women. As one older farmer remarked, the fact that women now also have to conduct the hard work on the field and not only the complementary work such as weeding (*cuci rumput*), could be seen as the ultimate proof of their impoverishment and different socio-economic organization. This proactive role played by the women contrasts with the findings in Kate-Kate. This does not only relate to labour activities on the field, but in particular to trading. To paraphrase the woman from Kate-Kate, as there was some land to cultivate in Hila-Tanah Putih, the women at least had something to sell. Although it was confirmed in all discussions that the level of selling activities among women had declined since their relocation as there was less arable land available, there was still a considerable number of women engaged in the selling of agricultural produce. This could happen inside the camp but in some cases, women attempted to go further and some of them went to the market of Mardika on a daily basis.

Although additional research needs to be undertaken to confirm or refute this hypothesis, these data tend to indicate that the mobility of men in rural areas increases in the case of insufficient arable land, in particular for those communities cultivating labour-intensive, short-term crops.⁶ The reverse is

⁶ This is not the case for the cultivation of perennial crops that are only harvested once or twice a year, mainly destined for external markets and require a different

true for the women, although the picture here is slightly more complicated. As I already explained in chapter 4, there are, by and large, two systems of food distribution in Ambon. In the first system, the total produce is sold to middlemen who then further distribute these food crops to petty traders. In this system, the farmer is not involved in the selling and therefore spends most of his time within the border of the village. It looks as if this system is popular in case of abundant land access. For instance, in some Butonese settlements in Rumah Tiga, farmers admitted that they had access to many land and that women were actively involved in all types of labour on the field. Therefore, they did not consider it necessary to sell their own produce as they already were busy all day long. When land access is more limited, it looks as if households prefer to bring their own produce to the market. Within this second system, there is a rather strict gender labour division between men and women, in a sense that the daily activities of men are spent on the field while the local distribution of the food crops is almost entirely organized by women. However, when land is hardly available, this mobility of women through petty trading activities once again drastically declines.

labour division. Therefore, the cultivation of perennial crops, in general controlled by the indigenous Ambonese *adat* community, can be easily combined with other jobs. For those engaged in the labour-intensive cultivation and marketing of short-term crops, this is more difficult. Although there are many reasons for the high level of civil servants among the indigenous Ambonese, this is one possible explanation that is never accounted for.

6.4. The tenacity of customary ownership rights

A second factor explaining the differences in terms of social vulnerability is the observation that secure access rights to land are not lost, despite geographical migration. For instance, concerning the community of Iha-Liang, I already mentioned that this community can potentially claim their former village land on Saparua. In the meantime, despite their migration to Liang, this community has about 500 acres of land where they still cultivate cloves through a traditional *pela* relationship with a village on West Seram, named Samasuru.⁷ Although their land in Saparua remains untouched and therefore unproductive, the clove harvest in West Seram is an important source of financial income for the village.

The same counts for the Protestants of Hila/Kaitetu. Although they never belonged to the indigenous *adat* community, there existed secure institutional agreements through which they grew perennial crops. An example was their access to sagu, a staple food derived from the sagu tree, which provided them with a high level of food security (von Benda Beckmann, 1990b; Brouwer, 1998). For the Protestants, these sagu trees were traditionally accessed in Kaitetu. Interestingly, despite their relocation, they did not lose their access rights to these sagu trees in Kaitetu. In this regard, sagu trees as a source of subsistence food provision in times of crisis are still available and it was acknowledged that when necessary, people would definitely make use of

⁷ For an elaboration on these *pela* relationships, see chapter 8

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these trees. This is also the case for their clove and nutmeg trees in Kaitetu which are still cultivated and harvested. So, although in their new relocation site, the Protestants of Hila/Kaitetu have the same status as non-Moluccan settler communities, they could safeguard many of the more secure access rights they had before 1999. Only in those cases in which perennial crops have been cut down, has this relocated community lost the property rights to this land (see chapter 3). This cultivation of clove and nutmeg provided important sources of cash for the community in Hila-Tanah Putih. In contrast, the Butonese in Kate-Kate did not have these sorts of customary ownership rights prior to their expulsion and therefore could not take advantage of them since their relocation. As a consequence, food insecurity was particularly higher in this site.

This tenacity of customary ownership rights is remarkable, especially when compared to formal ownership rights. For instance, the majority of the Butonese in Kate-Kate possessed formal ownership awards for their housing land and their houses in Eerie. Since their expulsion, this formal ownership status has been lost and they have never been properly compensated for this. The same goes for many people currently living in Hila-Tanah Putih and Kayu Tiga. When asking what sort of legal means will be applied in order to reclaim this lost property, many people are rather desperate and consider bringing the case to court too costly and time-consuming. In contrast, customary ownership rights are not lost after forced expulsion, at least in those cases where the perennial crops on these customary lands have not been

deliberately cut down with the aim of taking over the land. These data thus tend to indicate that ownership rights based on *adat* customary law are stronger than those based on formal state law, in particular in relation of migration.

6.5. Conclusion: New arenas of contestation

Because relocated communities are by definition non-indigenous to the territory they migrated to, the government did not provide arable land and the purchasing of land through formal certificates was considered too expensive, these people could only access arable land through insecure sharecropping agreements on these new sites. There are many examples where these agreements have been broken to the advantage of the host community. It is also important to note how forced migration sometimes reinvigorated existing tensions regarding land access among the host community as the value of the land increased when migrants came to be settled there. However, despite the fact that access to arable land is insecure in all relocation sites studied, the relationship with social vulnerability is complex. Although I did not gather quantitative data on income generation, it was obvious that vulnerability was higher in Kate-Kate compared to the camp of Hila-Tanah Putih. Two factors proved to be decisive in this matter. The first one is the status of these communities prior to their forced expulsion. Communities having an indigenous status could maintain some of their customary ownership status,

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despite their geographical migration, resulting in a higher level of food security and extra sources of cash. Interestingly, these customary ownership awards tend to be more secure than formal ownership awards which were often lost due to forced migration. This observation also refines the idea that all relocated communities by definition start from scratch. Secondly, although access to arable land was characterized by high levels of tenure insecurity, remarkable differences were encountered in the amount of land that could be accessed. In general, one can say that those communities who went searching for land on their own were better off than those communities which were relocated through government plans.

It is important to note that the sharp impoverishment the Butonese of Kate-Kate were confronted with, was a source of profound frustration. As I demonstrated, due to lack of access to land, some Butonese living in Kate-Kate have decided to illegally squat land. This has given emergence to tensions, not only with the private community owning this piece of land, but also with the host community which fears that these Butonese will attempt occupying pieces of their land. This situation in Kate-Kate is illustrative of the fate of many Butonese communities. It is generally estimated that 160,000 Butonese were forced to flee Maluku province, after the outbreak of violence in the beginning of 1999 (Palmer 2004). Many of these people went back to Sulawesi but a considerable part has remained in Ambon. For the majority of these Butonese, access to arable land is limited or simply nonexistent, as all the Muslim Butonese were forced to flee to Muslim areas which became

overpopulated. Therefore, in many places on Ambon island, the squatting of arable land by displaced Butonese communities poses a problem. Examples can be noted in Waiheru and Ahuru where Butonese are farming on land formally owned by the Catholic church. These lands were occupied during the *kerusuhan* when the Catholics living there had to flee. Similar problems were noted in Poka/Rumah Tiga, Batu Kuning and Tantui. This has further increased the resentment against these Butonese communities among many Ambonese, both Christian and Muslim, which consider the Butonese as becoming 'very aggressive' in their economic strategies.

On the other hand, the large-scale evictions of the Butonese, the impossibility to return and the extremely dire economic circumstances many of these relocated migrant communities find themselves in, has increased awareness among many Butonese, both relocated and non-relocated. This could be encountered in ethnically confined organizations (*paguyuban*) of the Butonese in Ambon. A clear case in point is the *BKMM-Sultra* (*Badan Keturunan Masyarakat Maluku - Sulawesi Tenggara*, Committee of the Descendants of Moluccan Society – Southeast Sulawesi). It is already interesting studying this name which was changed in 2005. Before, this organization was named *BKM-Sultra* (*Badan Keturunan Masyarakat – Sulawesi Tenggara*, Committee of the Descendants of Southeast Sulawesi Society). While before 2005, they thus characterized themselves of descendants of Southeast Sulawesi, the homeland of the Butonese, since 2005, they wish to characterize themselves as Moluccan people which are from Southeast Sulawesi descent. This is a

fundamental change. As the *ketua* (leader) of the BKMM-Sultra explains, the time has come that the Butonese are recognized as real Moluccans with the same rights. Central to their struggle is a stronger political representation in which they take advantage of the strong numerical presence of the Butonese in the Moluccas in the new democratic era since 1998. Resource management is one of the prime fields in which they intend to gain an increasing say and the exclusivist new land laws that have been described in chapter 5, confirming migrants in a secondary legal position, are explicitly mentioned as a central struggle for this *BKMM-Sultra*. For instance, they aim to transform the many Butonese *dusun* (sub-villages) into formal *desa* (village), that have a same legal status as the *negeri* and sharply resent the idea of the *negeri administratif*. They also disagree with the fact that, according to these new laws, the village head has to belong to the indigenous *adat* law community. It is still too early to see how these struggles between ethnic *paguyuban* and certain forces - in particular within the Protestant dominated, powerful PDI-P - defending the legal rights of the indigenous Ambonese population will evolve in the future. Moreover, it is clear that the power of a *paguyuban* such as the BKMM-Sultra is still limited despite the fact that some rich Butonese businessmen joined the organization in 2006. Nevertheless, it is an undeniable fact that resentment among many ethnic Butonese has sharply increased since the conflict, and will be a factor to be reckoned with in the future.

VII

Downward social mobility, prestige and the informal economy¹

'The conflict was a learning process that made us all equal'

Jeffrey, Ambonese tricycle taxi driver

This chapter illustrates how competition at the lower class bazaar level of the economy has vigorously intensified since the ending of the recent communal conflict in Ambon. As has been demonstrated in chapter 4, due to a decline of the formal economy, many people - in particular women - attempted to generate income in the informal economy for everyday survival. This was further encouraged by spatial transformations during which Muslim migrant communities became locked up in Muslim areas and Christian Ambonese took over these businesses in the Christian parts of the city. This increasing importance of the informal economy for household survival has continued since the ending of the *kerusuhan* with many men engaging in informal transport activities. This brought about the downward social mobility of many autochthonous Ambonese as they started engaging in economic activities

¹ The outline of this chapter is based on the article: 'Downward Social Mobility, Prestige and the Informal Economy in Post-Conflict Ambon', *South East Asia Research*, 16 (3): 293-311.

which before the conflict were dominated by lower class Muslim migrant communities. Simply stated, many autochthonous Ambonese took up ‘dirty men’s jobs’, which affected their traditional elite status in Ambonese society. This particularly played for the Ambonese Protestant community.

7.1. Socio-economic change and ethnic competition

Due to the strong and visible religious underpinnings of the recent communal conflict, it is often forgotten that ethnic cleavages between a migrant and an autochthonous community have always been a hallmark of Ambonese society. As I illustrated in chapter 5, this ethnic cleavage is particularly strong in issues of land access. Also in urban and peri-urban areas, competition between a growing group of migrants and the autochthonous Ambonese (including Christians and Muslims) has always been pertinent. This group of ethnic migrants is commonly referred to as BBM, which is an abbreviation that stands for Bugis, Butonese and Makkasarese. These are three ethnic groups originating from the neighbouring island of Sulawesi. Increasingly, the term is also used to refer to other and smaller migrant communities such as the Madurese coming from Java or people coming from the city of Padang. As far as I could see, this term is applied for Muslim groups that are ethnically non-Moluccan and are engaged in informal, lower class economic activities. For instance, in the city of Ambon, there are a lot of small eating places (*warung makan*) that are run by Muslims from Padang. Quite some Madurese

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are engaged in the *becak* (tricycle) business. This term however is not applicable for migrant communities originating from within the Moluccas, even if they are Muslim. For instance, there are quite some poor Muslim IDPs from North Maluku who fled to Ambon during the conflict. These people were never referred to as BBM. This label also contains a strong Muslim connotation as this, for instance, does not include Catholic migrant communities originating from Flores. Although the BBM are considered to be ethnic migrants or *masyarakat pendatang*, most of these people are born in the Moluccas and have never seen their homeland. The history of migration of the BBM to Ambon is largely a voluntary and long-term migration of poor people searching for a sustainable livelihood that had its origins during Dutch colonial times. Their migration is related to certain economic dynamics in the regional centre of Ambon and the search for vacant lands on the many Moluccan islands, including Ambon (Bartels 2002, Palmer 2004).

Generally speaking one can state that before 1999, economic roles were quite fixed. In urban and peri-urban environments, the BMM were essentially involved in poorly paid, day-to-day survival type of jobs in the informal economy such as petty trade and private transport (Mearns 1996). Therefore, both in terms of prestige and income, the majority of this group of BBM could be labeled as lower class. Importantly, for both Christian and Muslim Ambonese, the category of BBM has always carried a negative connotation as they are considered as dirty, dumb and at times even aggressive. This was illustrated through some encounters in the early stages of my fieldwork. For

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instance, walking in the bustling market of Mardika, I witnessed a discussion between two men. As these sorts of lively discussions in Mardika are common, I did not pay much attention to the men until suddenly the argument turned nastier and the men became more physical. The customer angrily denounced the seller as a “BBM” who did not sell his goods at fair prices to locals like himself. This quarrel immediately reminded me of another incident a couple of days earlier when I took an *angkot* (minibus) around the island of Ambon. During the ride, the minibus filled up with teenagers who had just finished school. When they noticed to their amazement that this foreigner was able to speak their language, an ordinary chit-chat developed about my opinions on Ambon and their school and daily life. Suddenly, the cheerful discussion took a more aggressive turn when one student pointed to another one and warned me to be cautious with her because she was a Bugis and all Bugis conceal knives behind their backs. The student added that a lot of these people have a nasty smell. The rest of the teenagers in the bus all thought it very amusing, except for the girl. Due to this stigmatizing connotation, which also stands for *Bahah Bahan Minyak* or fuel, this migrant community will never refer to themselves as BBM. BBM thus is considered as a term of abuse and it would be inappropriate to address people from non-Moluccan descent as BBM. Related to these negative stereotypes were the nature of typical ‘BBM jobs’ such as driving a *becak* which are insecure, tough, poorly paid and therefore considered as low in social status.

In opposition to the BBM stand the autochthonous Ambonese or the so-called *masyarakat adat*, a term that can be translated by the community of traditional laws and practices of Ambon which contrasts the secondary status of the migrant community. This superior status is even more pronounced in the case of the Christian Ambonese who are considered to be elite because of their historical involvement in the state bureaucracy as civil servants (Chauvel 1990). The elite status of this Protestant community is therefore strongly related to the word '*ambtenaar*'. This Dutch word, which is commonly used in Ambon, is the literal translation for civil servant. This word already implies a high level of economic security, but in the Ambonese context also reflects the high social standing, prestige and educational opportunities of the Protestant community which stems from their privileged treatment during colonial times. As I explained in chapter 3, this 'golden boy status' of a Protestant elite already was threatened from the nineties onwards due to a stronger involvement of (autochthonous) Muslim intellectuals in the state bureaucracy. In terms of prestige and standing however, divisions between autochthonous Ambonese and migrant communities remained very much alive.

These divisions also led to a particular sort of stereotyping towards the autochthonous Ambonese as being lazy.² Here one sees how the image of the

² This is somewhat related to the typical '*Ambon Manise*' (Sweet Ambon) clichés. This Ambon Manise theme can be retrieved in many songs by local Ambonese bands and refers to a self-proclaimed image of Ambon as a remote, quiet and supposedly harmonious region where people enjoy the good life far away from the money

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ambtenaar also contains a reverse side. Apart from the *ambtenaar* as being elite and highly educated, there exists a deeply held conviction that civil servants are lazy, corrupted people who are sleeping all day long on their desk. While the BBM are considered to make money through honest, hard work, large parts of the autochthonous community are considered to make 'easy' money through 'easy' jobs in the state bureaucracy. This image of the lazy Ambonese also plays in the field of agricultural labour. While many Butonese in the countryside are involved in the cultivation of labour-intensive, short-term crops, the Ambonese can just sit back and let their perennial crops grow. In many cases, Butonese are then paid as day labourers or hired through sharecropping agreements to pluck the fruits from these trees. Interestingly, this sort of stereotyping not only lived among BBM communities but was also something which large parts of the autochthonous Ambonese community attributed to themselves, albeit in a more friendly way as 'the friendly, relaxed people who are enjoying the good life'.

The traditional division between this Muslim migrant community and the autochthonous Ambonese has been reshuffled throughout the *kerusuhan*. Due to the economic downfall in Ambon, in particular those households that were dependent on formal wage labour for their income were hardly hit. As a consequence, many Ambonese were forced to enter 'poor man's jobs' in the informal economy that before the conflict were considered as BBM

grabbing and pollution of Jakarta and Java. These songs are often accompanied by a video clip in which endless images of the sea and the Ambonese beaches are shown.

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strongholds. This downward social mobility particularly affected the Ambonese Christians as their involvement in insecure casual employment was further exacerbated by the fact that Muslim BBM were confined to the Muslim areas of the island and were unable to reach the Christian areas. Consequently, Christian Ambonese had a particular incentive to take over these businesses in the Christian parts of the island. Following the end of the conflict, the autochthonous Ambonese do not want to leave these jobs behind as opportunities in other economic sectors are limited. This has caused intense economic competition at the lower class levels of society that is taking on both an inter-ethnic and inter-religious character, given that a number of BBM that took refuge outside of Ambon have returned since the end of the conflict. In the meantime, the Ambonese Christians are increasingly being stripped of from their traditional elite status. This dynamic was poignantly illustrated by an Ambonese Muslim friend who stated: 'Ambonese always had a lot of nice trousers while the BBM only had one dirty trouser. The difference however is that this dirty trouser had a pocket full of money. Now it has become time for the Ambonese to put on their dirty trouser'. This process will be illustrated by two case studies. One concerns the private transport sector in the city of Ambon and the other considers changes in petty marketing since the end of the conflict in the towns of Passo and Ambon.

7.2. Private transport in the city of Ambon

Prior to the outbreak of the first riots, impoverished ethnic migrants largely dominated the business of tricycle taxis or the so-called *becaks*. This business is a typical example of informal and poorly remunerated self-employed urban labour that serves as a survival strategy for urban dwellers such as many BBM, among whom a majority are of Butonese descent. This dominance by the BBM began to languish once the violence unfolded in the beginning of 1999 and the Ambonese became increasingly involved in this sector. As I already demonstrated in chapter 4, the first explanation for this phenomenon is the grave regional economic decline - particularly in industrial, manufacturing and construction activities - which resulted in a loss in income for many people. The shock induced by the violence and the subsequent economic decline was felt harder amongst men as men traditionally had a stronger presence in formal, recorded labour in comparison to women. As a consequence, in particular in Christian areas, women took up a central and wage-earning role through informal petty trading activities throughout the *kerusuhan*.

Many men only started to take up jobs in the informal private transport sector from 2002 onwards, once a certain level of stability had returned to the region. Two major reasons should be given for this. First, most men considered it too dangerous to become involved in transport activities at the height of the *kerusuhan*. This was particularly the case for the rather slow and

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immobile tricycle taxis. As a reaction, there was an increase in the number of motorcycle taxis or *ojek*. These *ojek* allowed reaching a particular place in a quicker pace than was the case with other modes of transport such as a tricycle. This was a serious advantage in a risky urban environment that was often plagued by the presence of snipers. These motorcycle taxis could also easily escape from unexpected riots or roadblocks by sneaking away in small alleyways, which gave them an advantage over other motorized vehicles such as cars or minibuses. As such, these *ojeks* were particularly in demand for certain high-risk undertakings. The job of *ojek* driver was therefore considered as dangerous. On the other hand, the money that could be earned with this business could easily exceed 100.000 Rp. or about 10 euro's a day, which is high to Ambonese standards. Because of this high income, becoming involved in these sorts of activities was highly attractive for the many unemployed male youth. At the same time, throughout informal discussions, it became clear that many considered this as extremely dangerous. Some of these youth for instance stated that they had friends who were killed or became wounded when they were driving their *ojek* and therefore did not want to become involved in this business. An additional factor was the perception that men considered themselves as being more vulnerable for violence and aggression. Whether this was really true is hard to check but at least there existed a perception that it was safer for women than men to go out in daytime. Another factor was the fact that quite some men played a role in defense activities of certain neighbourhoods. For instance, in the camps of Wisma Atlit and THR there existed a rotation system in which men - in

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particular at night time - were standing guard at strategic locations in the camp. This made some people conclude that while in daytime, women were out to look for the money, at the night time, men were responsible for the physical protection of the family. This however also meant that in daytime, many men were taking a rest. All these factors contributed to the fact that there were relatively few men engaged in the informal economy throughout the *kerusuhan*. Once insecurity started to decrease from 2002 onwards, the engagement of the men in these activities, in particular transport activities, rose considerably.

A second factor that should not be forgotten is the fact that the sharp economic decline which started in 1999 has largely continued despite the ending of the conflict. Simply stated, many of the private companies which left Ambon during the *kerusuhan* have not returned after 2002. For instance, in the year 2006 GDP per capita grew by of 3,67% in Maluku, a figure that is lower compared to most other provinces in Indonesia (BPS 2007). This is also evident looking at the economic sectors that were among the hardest hit during the conflict. Between 2002 and 2006 manufacturing industries only grew by an annual growth rate of 4,3% and construction activities grew at an annual growth rate of 2,6% (BPS 2007). Therefore, many of the economic problems that started during the high-intensity conflict, still continue and many men still have huge problems finding a job in the private economy. One of the few options left are precarious jobs in private transport.

In particular Ambonese Christians became involved in the transport business. This is due to the spatial transformation by which the city of Ambon became separated into two mono-religious zones, divided by a frontline that could not be crossed for several years. Although many Christians only started to engage in transport from 2002/2003 onwards, during that period, still very few people dared to cross the religious borders in Ambon city. This dealt a serious blow to the ethnic Muslim migrants dominating the transport sector. First of all, Christian consumers which consisted of more than half of the total urban population fell away and secondly, the fact that the Muslims were pushed in a small area decreased the general demand for private transport among the remaining Muslim population. As a result, the number of BBM being engaged in private transport decreased. The opposite was the case in the Christian areas. As the traditional tricycle drivers were 'trapped' in the Muslim part of town, this economic sector was quickly taken over by Christian men. A further incentive for unemployed Christian men to take up jobs in private transport came from the fact that many of the *becaks*, traditionally driven by the BBM, were left behind in the Christian part of the town. Muslims who owned a *becak* but lived in Christian areas took refuge in the Muslim part of town during the riots, after which Christian youth saw the chance to steal the *becaks*.³ Many *becaks* were also taken over because they were rented from local businessmen who were of ethnic Chinese origin and lived in the better-

³ This was not only the case for *becaks* but occurred with all kinds of goods at both sides of the conflict.

off Christian neighbourhoods. Due to the violence, the Muslim BBM could no longer reach the Christian areas and these businessmen started to rent or even sell the *becaks* to Christians. Importantly, rather than a real economic opportunity, the involvement of Christian men in the *becak* business should be viewed as a form of economic survival. It is hard to give the exact daily income of a *becak* driver as this depends on different factors such as the strategic location of the taxi rank or the weather (*becaks* are more popular during the rainy season because they offer protection against the rain). However, it can be estimated that a full-time *becak* driver earns a daily income of between 25.000 Rp. and 50.000 Rp. The income for the few men who possess a private *becak* and do not rent their tricycle is higher as the average daily rent for a *becak* amounts around 25.000 Rp.⁴ The remuneration for an *ojek* driver is largely similar. Although the average income is slightly higher compared to a *becak* driver, the biggest problem here is the daily cost for petrol.

Interrupted by a short period of riots around April – May 2004, from 2003 onwards, relations between the Muslim and the Christian communities in the

⁴ In general, the majority of *becaks* are hired from local companies owned by ethnic Chinese. Private ownership of a *becak* is rather rare and if this is the case, this mostly occurred through a system of leasing after which a certain period of paying rent, the *becak* has become the property of the driver. In the case of the *ojeks*, private ownership is more common. Renting is generally done from private individuals and not from established companies. For instance, some *ojek* drivers confided me that they rented the motorcycle of civil servants who were out for work in daytime. After working hours, the motorcycle had to be given back.

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city of Ambon gradually began to thaw and Christian and Muslim *becak* drivers increasingly operated in each other's areas. Although the Muslim BBM drivers could drive around safely in Christian areas, they quickly realized there was new competition that was not there before the conflict. The first arena where this competition was evident was in the problems they faced to access taxi ranks and more specifically taxi ranks that would allow them access to many customers. Between 2001 and 2004, taxi ranks in the Christian part of the city were taken over by the Christian *becak* drivers. This created a segregation between Muslims and Christians who dominated the taxi ranks in their respective neighbourhoods. Highly problematic for the BBM is that many of the profitable taxi ranks such as the ones situated nearby the few hotels and government buildings are generally situated in the Christian part of the town. As a consequence, the BBM *becak* drivers are pushed away to the poorer and smaller Muslim neighbourhoods of Ambon city which results in lesser income.

In all the *becak* and *ojek* taxi stands I went to, I always asked where people lived. Apart from a few exceptions, I never spoke to a driver living in a Muslim neighbourhood and having a permanent taxi rank in a Christian neighbourhood and vice versa.⁵ It is thus clear that there exists a spatial division based on religious identity in these standing places. In the meantime, competition to access space within one and the same religious community has

⁵ Most of the exceptions were encountered in front of the main entrance of the governor's office in Ambon city where apparently, Muslims and Christians, work together.

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intensified. Although I was always aware that this was a pressing issue, it was only throughout my last fieldtrip in the summer of 2008 that I started noticing signboards such as the ones below indicating that there were no more places left in the taxi stands in Ambon city. Although I did not conduct a systematic study of all taxi stands in the city of Ambon, it looks as if these sorts of cardboards appeared in particular in the busy inner city of Ambon, close to strategic locations. Asking in these taxi stands why they hang up these cardboards, the predictable answer was that there was no more space for new *ojeks/becaks* and that they would lose their income when there would be too many *ojeks/becaks* at their stand.



Transcription: *Ojek depot. Tax: No admission of new ojeks* (Ambon town, July 2008)

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This *ojek* depot is situated close by the popular Mutiara hotel in the inner town of Ambon. All the *ojek* drivers I talked to in this taxi stand came from nearby urban Christian neighbourhoods. All but one worked before the outbreak of the violence in *perusahaan* (industry). The other person worked on a Korean fishing ship. The majority of them started their *ojek* business in 2003. They confirmed that around 2003 they could still make a good living with their business. Since a couple of years however, the number of *ojek* drivers has dramatically increased and therefore, their income has decreased. For that reason, the ‘original’ owners of the taxi stand have put up the cardboard signaling that new *ojek* drivers can only use their place if they pay tax (*pajak*). These taxes are not paid to one owner but to a group of people who considered themselves the original owners over the place. I could note at least eight people who belonged to this group of original owners. The number of drivers paying tax was impossible to define. Among this group of owners, there existed a daily rotation system in which one member of the group received the money. In other cases however, such as the one pictured below, this taxation system was not in place and the *ojek* drivers simply indicated they did not want any new *ojek* drivers at their stand.



Transcription: *Ojek depot Sultan Hairun Street... no admission of new ojek*
(Ambon town, July 2008)

Still another system can be labeled as ‘community-based entrance’. In these cases, only members of a delineated community are allowed to access a certain taxi stand. An interesting example is the Swan Island community, pictured below. The Swan Island community is not a particularly famous neighbourhood in Ambon and many random Ambonese I spoke to admitted that they had never heard of this community/neighbourhood. Yet, under the guidance of their local neighbourhood leader, some men decided in 2003 to set up a taxi stand that only allowed people belonging to this ‘Swan Island community’ based on the name of their small alleyway (*gang*).

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Swan Island community ojek/becak depot (Ambon town, July 2008)

A similar dynamic could be observed within the Muslim neighbourhoods in Ambon city, although I never came across similar signboards. Also here, many men interviewed indicated they had a job in the formal private economy before the outbreak of the *kerusuhan*. In particular a large number who were traditionally employed at the harbour lost their job during the conflict. A number of other people indicated that their working place has been burned down or destroyed. As a consequence, the number of Ambonese Muslims who became engaged in this private transport activities rose considerably and the competition to access space for taxi stands increased. For instance, people in a *becak* stand in Batu Merah indicated that there were about 30 people who were allowed to conduct their activities at their stand. This number of 30 however was already reached in 2005 and this was the maximum amount of

drivers their place could take. Since then, no new drivers have been admitted. Throughout collective interviews in these Muslim taxi stands, I have always felt restrained to collect data about ethnic background as these ethnic divisions are rather sensitive. Moreover, I could not ask people where they were living in order to find out their ethnic background as Ambonese Muslims and non-Ambonese Muslims are living together in the same neighbourhoods. However, throughout some private interviews, it became clear that the BBM communities increasingly feel the competition with the Ambonese Muslims.

7.3. Petty trade in Passo and Ambon city

Another arena where similar competition to access space can be witnessed are petty marketing activities. This is not only the case in the city centre of Ambon but also in Passo. Passo is a small town that is situated along the main road of the island linking the airport to the city of Ambon (see map No. 2). Shortly after the start of the conflict, the minority Muslim community living there had to flee. In the meantime, Passo attracted many Christian migrants coming from all over the region. These IDPs moved in with family or friends or settled in camps. Due to the inflow of migrants and its strategic location in which the place was reachable by the sea from two sides, all sorts of businesses were thriving during the conflict and the price for land and real estate soared. Also after the conflict, Passo was further upgraded with the

building of many new government buildings. As a consequence, Passo is currently often referred to as the second Ambon. Just like in the Christian part of Ambon town, Christian Passo was confronted with the emerging scarcity of high-quality food such as fresh fish and vegetables, shortly after the outbreak of violence. Before 1999, both the majority of producers and sellers of food crops in Passo consisted of ethnic Butonese. From the moment the Muslim Butonese could no longer access Passo to sell their produce and the Muslim Butonese minority living there was chased away, the supply of fresh, high-quality food dwindled. However, once the Christians were deprived of their access to locally produced food crops, new distribution networks were established which supplied the area with food. Just like in Ambon city, these alternative trade networks were often organized under the supervision of the TNI which was paid good money for this. Importantly, Christians living in Passo took over the selling of these food crops in the local market thereby replacing the Butonese petty traders. Due to the traditional low capital input that is required to start engaging in petty trade, the many internally displaced who were among the economically hardest hit, but also original Passo inhabitants, considered it inevitable to start engaging in this petty trade. In the meantime, the Butonese communities who traditionally cultivated land that belonged to Passo customary clans, were chased away and these deserted lands were taken over by Christians, in particular IDPs. These IDPs then sold their vegetables straight away at the market of Passo. Amongst others, the expelled community of Benteng Karang is actively involved in these petty marketing activities.

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Although communal relations between Muslims and Christians gradually started to normalize from late 2003 onwards, it was only from 2005/2006 that Muslims started to return to the market of Passo attempting to retain the position they had before the conflict. The principal arena through which this renewed competition is fought is access to space, and more specifically market space that allows for better economic profit. During and after the conflict in Passo, the local market became overcrowded with petty traders largely selling the same sorts of food crops. When in mid 2001, the whole Waai community fled to Passo, the old marketplace has been abandoned due to lack of space and a new market has been set up at the other side of the road. Since then, also this market continued growing. In this sort of context, the place where one sells becomes a defining advantage or disadvantage and access to space becomes very contentious. In Passo, one witnesses therefore a clear religious rationale behind the distribution of space. More specifically, market stalls occupying the frontline along the main road allow for a greater financial profit compared to market stalls that are hidden at the rear of the market. As a consequence, the market is religiously segregated with the Christians from Passo selling their food crops at the front of the market near the busy main road (*jalan raya*). These places were already occupied during the period of high-intensity conflict and vigorously maintained once the Butonese started to return to Passo. All the petty traders I talked to and who have their stall near the *jalan raya*, started their business between 1999 and 2002. Interestingly, none of these people were already involved in petty marketing before 1999. In contrast, the Muslims are pushed aside to the rear

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of the overcrowded marketplace which can only be reached by crossing some narrow and muddy alleyways. All of these traders I talked to started their activities in 2005 or 2006. Already at first gaze, it is clear that business is not particularly thriving at this rear of the market, compared with the places up front. Because of this spatial advantage, Christians in Passo manage to retain a competitive edge against the Butonese and curb a real influx of Butonese petty traders into the Passo market.

Similar dynamics are at play in the city centre of Ambon. The difference however is that this competition for market place is spread all over the inner city centre and does concentrate less in one and the same marketplace. As has been described in chapter 4, multiple Christian petty traders became involved in new markets or *pasar kaget*, situated in the Christian parts of the city during the conflict. Since the ending of the conflict, these *pasar kaget* have somewhat lost their relevance when Christian costumers increasingly started going back to the old Mardika market. Moreover, this market is closely linked to the Mardika transport terminal and is easily reachable for people living in the many peri-urban villages surrounding Ambon city. The Mardika market therefore attracts a broad range of customers spread all over the city and has largely retained its traditional role as the main centre of food selling in Ambon town. Here, the Christians encounter the same disadvantages as the Butonese in Passo, namely that they can no longer manage to access a profitable position in the market place as these have already become occupied by Muslims (both Butonese and Ambonese) during the conflict and have been

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maintained once the conflict ended. Interestingly, the few Christians petty traders I spoke to at Mardika already had a stall in Mardika before the outbreak of the *kerusuhan* and were involved in the local selling of perennial crops such as mango and coconut or a semi-perennial crop such as banana. These people came from villages on the Leitimur part of the island, in particular the village of Ema and some surrounding villages. The sellers from this area occupied one strategic corner at the market. Another 'Christian enclave' in Mardika consisted of Christians living in Soya. These people sold the same sorts of perennial or semi-perennial crops. Importantly, these petty traders from Ema and Soya had their own means of production, did therefore not depend on a middlemen and were already involved in the selling of these products before 1999. Asking these people how they managed to access market space in Mardika, they answered that everybody in the market knew that this was their legitimate place to sell as they already occupied this place before the outbreak of the *kerusuhan*. This sort of Christian sellers in Mardika however constituted a minority. Moreover, no Christian sellers could be found in Mardika who did not have own means of production, therefore depended on middlemen and started their business during the conflict.

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The overcrowded Mardika market (July 2008)

How did the many Christian women who became involved in food petty trade throughout the *kerusuhan* cope with the fact that the Mardika market retained its traditional role as the main centre of food distribution in the town? First of all, a large group has quit the business. For instance, the large majority of the Christian petty traders from Wisma Atlit have abandoned their petty trading activities. The foremost reason is that they lost their Christian costumers and could no longer compete with the sellers in Mardika. The Mardika market itself could not be accessed by the women of Wisma Atlit as all the market places were already occupied.⁶ Moreover, they could not claim a ‘legitimate’

⁶ It should also be noted that many of these women stated that they would not feel ‘comfortable’ selling at Mardika, even if it would be possible. Although these women

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space in Mardika they already occupied before the conflict as was the case with the sellers from Soya or Ema. As a consequence, it looks as if gender roles as they existed before the conflict have been largely reinstated among this Protestant community. As has been described, throughout the high-intensity violence, many women took up an outward oriented, income generating role while many men stayed home and had no source of income. An opposite dynamic has occurred since the ending of the conflict. Many women gave up their job in petty trading and men increasingly started to engage in the informal transport business. In this regard, many women returned to their pre-conflict, more inside-oriented role while many men retained their traditional outside-oriented role. This hypothesis was also confirmed throughout the many household interviews I conducted in 2007 in the relocation camp of Kayu Tiga. It was striking to observe how in daytime, this camp was primarily inhabited by women and the elderly, while young and adult men were almost totally absent.

In the meantime, many of the *pasar kaget* in the Christian areas that were established throughout the *kerusuhan* such as the ones in Belakang Soya and Batu Meja were still at place during my last field visit in the summer of 2008, although their size had obviously decreased compared to my first visit in 2004. Conducting interviews at these markets throughout 2007, it was obvious that these sellers held very much on to these markets despite some

did no fear direct physical threats, many still considered this as a somewhat hostile place where they do not feel at ease.

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notable economic disadvantages. For instance, the majority of petty traders I spoke to at these markets bought their vegetables, fruits and fish at middlemen in Mardika. This meant that their transportation cost for bringing their food to their market place was higher compared to the petty traders at Mardika. This slightly increased the price of their products. Moreover, they only attracted customers who lived at walking distance from their market while the sellers at Mardika had a wide range of customers due to the proximity of the transport terminal who brought people from all over the city to Mardika. Also, all of them admitted that the profits they made were higher throughout the *kerusuhan* as they had lost many customers since the ending of the conflict. Yet, these petty traders also stated that they saw this as their sole possibility to earn some income. Therefore, the constant rumors about the closing down of their market by the city government, were a constant worry. Unfortunately, I never managed to interview government officials responsible for the regulation of markets in the city of Ambon. Therefore, it is impossible to give the 'exact' story about the government plans in this issue. In July 2008 however, many informal market stalls on the market of Mardika were destroyed in an effort to smoothen the traffic to the transport terminal.⁷ There was a general expectancy that the same would happen for the market stalls that were situated in Belakang Soya and Batu Meja. Apparently, the reason

⁷ Important in this regard is the fact that Ambon won several times the title of the most clean city in Indonesia in the nineties. This contrasts the current outlook of the city in which many areas are packed with informal businesses which often cause traffic jams and which are by many Ambonese considered as dirty (*kotor*). It looks as if the city government has the plan to gradually eradicate these 'dirty places'.

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this had not happened yet was the resistance encountered by many Christian market women and the fear of the city government to provoke tensions by violently removing the stalls. Anticipating to this expected move that many of the *pasar kaget* in the Christian part of the city will be abolished in the near future, the city government already decided to establish a new market for these Christian petty traders. The popularity of this market, called Tagalaja, is limited. While the markets in Belakang Soya and Batu Meja are still situated along a so-called *jalan raya*, this Tagalaja market can only be reached through a small alleyway. Moreover, in contrast to Mardika, the market is not situated near a busy transport terminal and transportation cost is high considering that these petty traders still have to buy their food crops from agents situated in Mardika. Therefore, as can be derived from the picture underneath, business is not particularly thriving in Tagalaja and the market stalls provided by the government largely remain empty. Even in case the markets in Belakang Soya and Batu Meja would be abolished, selling at this markets was not considered a viable option for the majority of traders.

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The largely empty Tagalaja market (July 2008)

7.4. Conclusion: downward social mobility and prestige

The world of the Ambonese and the Muslim ethnic migrants had few junctures in urban environments during the New Order. While many BBM were involved in the informal economy, autochthonous Ambonese searched for a more 'secure job' through formalized wage labour either in the private economy or in the state bureaucracy. These case studies illustrate how these two worlds have increasingly become intertwined because the conflict induced a process in which Ambonese were forced to search for alternative income generation strategies in insecure and informal economies that before the conflict were dominated by Muslim ethnic migrants. This was further

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enforced by some of the spatial transformations that occurred throughout the *kerusuhan*. Although most of the Christians who entered the informal economy were employed as blue collar labourers or were simply unemployed and therefore belonged to the lower class of society, this transformation meant a bitter fall in terms of prestige and is experienced as a real downward social mobility. As a Christian tricycle driver told: 'the conflict all made us equals'. Another sector in which this loss in prestige is particularly felt is garbage collection. Before the conflict, these 'dirty jobs' that are very low in prestige were solely done by BBM. Since the start of the conflict however Ambonese Christians have become involved in collecting, recycling or sorting garbage.

Remarkably, this vigorous economic competition at the lower class level of society is both religiously and ethnically framed. A complaint regularly heard among many Christian *becak* drivers is that they no longer possess the networks to become *ambtenaar* and therefore have to earn an income in underpaid casual employment. For instance, some of them complained that their current downward social mobility is due to the so-called '*orang Pelauw*', by which they refer to a clique of powerful Muslim political leaders coming from the village of Pelauw on the island of Saparua. In this narrative, this clique is responsible for the fact that young Christians no longer have a chance of entering the state bureaucracy because practices of KKN (Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism) favour Muslims. Importantly, with this narrative they explicitly indicate that the religious tensions evident in the build up to the conflict are currently still alive in Ambon. In the meantime, the

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economic frustrations that are felt among many Ambonese Christians are often voiced by ethnic migrants and particularly the aggressiveness by which they try to push out 'local people' out of this informal economy, thereby depriving them of their last option to generate income.

Due to this downward social mobility of autochthonous Ambonese, classic fault lines that existed in Ambonese society before 1999 are being redefined. During the New Order, religion essentially functioned as an identity marker to control access to the state bureaucracy. This serves as one of the main explanations why the conflict in Ambon was religiously framed as group mobilization in the lead up to the violence was organized around contentious state access (Van Klinken, 2007). As state access was defined by an implicit distribution code between a Muslim and a Christian Ambonese power block, the overall conflict ensuing from this struggle was also organized through these same conflicting religious identities. On the other hand, at the lower class bazaar level of society, the trust networks that regulated the economy were largely ethnic in nature. As a consequence, skirmishes with a strong ethnic connotation have always been commonplace in the city of Ambon. Often these fights were provoked by economic competition between BBM and autochthonous Ambonese and the inability of unemployed Ambonese youngsters to penetrate some of the informal businesses that were dominated by the BBM. Already before the conflict, Ambonese youngsters were willing to take up jobs in the informal economy. This was not because of the attractiveness of these jobs but rather due to economic hardship and the fact

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that Ambon before 1999 was already characterized by an exceptional high level of officially recorded unemployment of 21,4 % (Mawdsley et.al. 2005). As our two case studies have illustrated, due to the high-intensity conflict, some incentives were created for Ambonese to penetrate these informal economies. First, the BBM had to flee to Muslim neighbourhoods or to neighbouring Sulawesi and a further economic downfall made the search for alternative sources of income even more pressing. As a consequence, the traditional ethnic segmentation of this lower class informal economy has been challenged by the penetration of downwardly mobile rival groups such as Ambonese Christians, and to a lesser extent, Ambonese Muslims.

Similar to the Ambonese Christians, many Muslim ethnic migrants have a feeling that they are the ones who are the 'losers' of the conflict as they currently face vigorous competition on economic terrains they nearly monopolized before the violence. This did not directly result in a loss of prestige as the BBM already were at the bottom of the societal spectrum anyway. This, however, seriously decreases their financial profits in these informal businesses. In the Christian part of the island, they are largely pushed out and it does not look as if they will recapture these businesses in the near future. As has been illustrated, this does not immediately pose a problem for informal petty trade but is particularly felt in the sector of informal transport activities. Among many BBM there is a feeling that they are being invaded on their own economic terrain and that the involvement of

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new actors in petty trading and private transport is the principal reason for their current economic difficulties.

VIII

Repairing a broken order.

Forced migration, *adat* and a purified present¹

In Ambon, a revitalization of *adat* is shaped by a dynamic aiming to induce a reconciliation between the distrustful Christian and Muslim communities. This chapter illustrates how this particular resurgence of *adat* is reflected in the way indigenous communities cope with spatial relocation resulting from the recent *kerusuhan*. As has been illustrated in chapter 5, *adat* can be defined as customary land tenure that is deployed in relation to issues of village governance and competition for access to resources. This deployment of *adat* in post-Suharto Indonesia is closely related with a decentralization move in which the regions gained more autonomy in matters of resource management. Meanwhile, part of the attraction of *adat* also lies in its evocation of ideals of purity, authenticity and tradition (Biezeveld 2004, 2007, Davidson and Henley, 2007, Li 2007, 2000). The redeployment of *adat* in Ambon, switches between these two characteristics. On the one hand, it has been used in an utterly ethnicized sense, serving the political and economic interests of indigenous *adat* law communities. On the other hand, some of the values that

¹ The outline of this chapter is based on the article: 'Repairing a broken order. Forced migration, *adat* and a purified present on the island of Ambon, Indonesia', *Ethnology* (accepted)

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are ascribed to *adat* such as purity, unity, tradition and authenticity also feature prominently in Ambon.²

More in particular, there has been a specific interpretation of *adat* in Ambon due to its close connection with strategies of reconciliation (Frost 2004, Bräuchler 2007). There exists a strong belief across broad sections of Ambonese society that *adat* needs to be revived for two related purposes. *Adat* should reconcile a religiously fractured society, according to this view, but in the meantime has to stand as a defense against future attempts by external actors to pit Ambonese against each other through religious fault lines. Within this belief, the revival of *adat* has obtained a territorial interpretation among indigenous communities that have been relocated due to the recent inter-religious violence. Relocated indigenous communities in Ambon can be termed as communities in exile as they express feelings of territorial alienation and explicitly wish to return to the home village where they possess a genealogical relation to the land they lived on. Rather than following an economic agenda, this willingness to return expresses an urge to instate a renewed *adat* order and a purified present where mental and spatial religious segregation has been overcome. The return to the historical home village is therefore represented as a part of the overall project to restore an

² A similar distinction has also been made by Cooley (1962: 2), almost 50 years ago. According to Cooley, *adat* in Ambon is used in two ways. First, in a very general way as a vestige of indigenous religion and secondly, it contains a more concrete customary usage

adat order based on ideals of authenticity and unity. Simply stated, the ‘back to *adat*’ belief has been translated into a ‘back to the *adat* home village’ idea.

8.1. Life realities versus legal categories

Assumptions about relocation being a durable and final solution to forced migration have greatly influenced the policy regarding internal displacement in Ambon. In those cases in which communities could not return to the place they were living before their forced expulsion, both the local government (*Keputusan Gubernur Maluku*, No.261, November 14, 2002) and international NGOs considered relocation as the end station of a cycle. This cycle started with the violent eviction of these populations, their time in an IDP camp and finally their permanent relocation to a neutral, one could almost say ‘normal’ environment. This meant two things. First, because Muslims have been relocated to Muslim territories and Christians to Christian territories, mono-religious zones that became established throughout the *kerusuhan* have been enforced. Secondly, once relocated, these people became devoid of any further humanitarian assistance and were expected to become self-reliant. In short, relocated populations were no longer considered a problem for the government and aid agencies.

In contrast to this static and legal interpretation of relocation as the end of the trip, in all four sites that have been studied, a different understanding of

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relocation was discovered. In fact, the term relocation or the Indonesian counterpart *relokasi* only figures in policy documents provided by international NGOs and the local government and the term is hardly used among the relocated populations themselves. Rather, the term *penungsi* which is generally translated as refugee but in everyday language also includes the category of internally displaced person is used by these relocated people to describe themselves. Therefore, little distinction is made between the place one is currently living in and the time that was spent in IDP camps before the official relocation. While the term '*camp penungsi*' (refugee camp) is used to refer to these officially designated IDP camps, the term '*tempat penungsi*' (refugee place) is commonly used to indicate the place these people are currently living. Camp in this sense is understood as something of a chaotic nature while a place is more orderly and consists of housing facilities of better quality. Yet, both places are labeled as 'refugee' and very few distinctions are made between the context of internal displacement and permanent relocation. The official name for these places, '*tempat relokasi*' (relocation place) was not encountered once in the everyday language of these relocated populations. In other words, relocation is considered as an extension of a situation of forced migration and relocation in a legal sense is not followed by relocation in a mental sense.

An important factor explaining this tenacity to the status of refugee in all four relocation sites is a feeling that injustice has been done to them. Throughout the conflict, officially obtaining the legal status of *penungsi* opened the door

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to reconstruction funds in a region characterized by insecurity and economic decline. At the same time, claiming the status of refugee has always been contested as clear definitions of what exactly constitutes internal displacement were obscure and people who were not forced migrants by any standard tried to obtain access to these funds. Once this label of *penungsi* was officially obtained, many people were much attached to its status. Disassociating from this label and accepting a new context of relocation - which presumes a return to some sort of normality - means that one disassociates from the eventual reconstruction funds related to this status. However, as livelihood opportunities after relocation are particularly meager due to restrained access to arable land and an overall slow recovery of the economy after a period of steep decline, many people still think they have a legitimate right to these funds and feel abandoned by the government and NGOs. Moreover, a widespread perception that much of the refugee funds for the internally displaced coming from Jakarta ended up in the hands of local politicians and real estate companies has further fed the belief that one maintained a legitimate right to this humanitarian assistance.³

Holding on this 'refugeeness' and denying relocation also stands central in struggles to obtain access to lost property. Discussing access to land in all four relocation sites, one is immediately confronted with the central role still

³ Similar issues have been noted in other contexts such as war-torn Sri Lanka where attempts to register IDPs as 'local citizens' have failed because many of the IDPs feared that access to aid would be lost in this sense (Brun 2003: 386-387).

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played by the home village and the fact that some of the lands and other property that have been left behind are not considered as lost. Disassociating from the status of refugee and accepting a new context of normality implies that one disassociates from the right to reclaim the property that has been taken over after forced migration. On the other hand, holding on to the status of refugee implies that one still claims rights over these properties. For instance, many Butonese living in the camp of Kate-Kate were frustrated that many of the land and houses they considered as rightly theirs were taken over during their flight. This was also the case for the camp of Kayu Tiga where the lack of compensation for property - in particular housing facilities - that was taken over throughout the conflict was a source of enduring frustration. Therefore, the refusal to accept a new context of relocation/normality can to a large extent be explained by this feeling of deprivation in which relocation is considered a defeat to a perpetual struggle of reclaiming lost property.

8.2. The preservation of a communal identity

Despite this tenacity to the status of refugee in all four relocation sites, some considerable differences could be encountered between these different sites. Among the two relocated indigenous *adat* law communities in Tanah Putih and Liang, this was inextricably linked with ideas about return to the place these people were living before the conflict. Moreover one witnessed a much stronger preservation of a communal identity compared to the relocated non-

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adat communities in Kate-Kate and Kayu Tiga. This should primarily be understood in a negative way as these *adat* communities express a feeling of alienation and a sense they are currently living in a place that is a historical anomaly to them.

While the term *penungsi* among relocated non-indigenous communities was primarily understood in a legal sense, among the relocated *adat* communities, this also reflects an overall context of alienation. The term expresses a feeling of being driven out and an indication that the place one is currently living is in fact an anomaly, a historical and geographical incorrectness. Revealing in this regard are the connections that are made with the conflict in the Middle East. Although references to the Israeli-Palestinian violence could be witnessed in different contexts in Ambon, these links obtained a particular interpretation among relocated indigenous communities. For instance, the Christians in Tanah Putih often stated that they felt akin to the people of Israel having been driven out of their home lands by a Muslim aggressor. These sorts of pronouncements expressing a feeling of alienation and being uprooted were barely present among non-*adat* relocated communities where the primary concerns were about the dire circumstances in which they had to live. Closely related to this observation is a stronger preservation of a communal identity based on the inhabitation of the village where these two indigenous communities lived before their forced eviction. This is seen in the way these communities wish to represent themselves by a name that includes their former village. The community living in Iha explicitly stated they prefer to

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address their new place as Iha-Liang. The same goes for Hila-Tanah Putih where people demanded that in coming to their place, I should tell the minibus drivers to stop at Hila-Tanah Putih rather than Tanah Putih or Tawiri. Interestingly, even T-shirts are made and worn within the camp that depict ‘Hila. The White Land’ (‘White Land’ is the English translation for Tanah Putih). Questioning the reasons behind the making of these T-shirts, it was explained that it was of utmost importance that people from the surrounding area would know and remember them as people coming from Hila.



Hila-Tanah Putih/Tawiri (July 2008)

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Part of the explanation for this lies in the fact that their relocation is linked to a loss of prestige. Because of their forced migration and subsequent relocation, *adat* communities find themselves in a subordinate position, no longer being able to claim a historical relationship to the territory they are living on. Apart from the legal and socio-economic consequences I elaborated on in chapter 7, this means a considerable decline in prestige. Illustrative in this regard is the often cited fear in the camp of Iha-Liang of being viewed in the same light as the migrant Butonese settlements in Liang. In particular, the notion that some of the typical stereotypes regarding the Butonese communities such as their supposed dirtiness and aggression would be ascribed to their community was a constant worry. In this regard, there is a strong sense that their dignity as an indigenous *adat* community is affected and the preservation of their indigenous identity should be understood as a detachment from the surrounding non-Ambonese migrant communities.

Moreover, in Iha-Liang and Hila-Tanah Putih, people wished to preserve the unity of their community. This was not the case in the other two relocation sites where this strong collective identity was hardly present and people definitely made no efforts to preserve this collective identity. For instance, some Protestant Batu Merah inhabitants who were relocated to Kayu Tiga openly stated that their primary aim to claim a house in Kayu Tiga was to sell this house and use this money to start living in another place. As a consequence, people not originating from Batu Merah increasingly came to live in Kayu Tiga and this relocation site transforms into a normal Christian

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neighborhood at the outskirts of Ambon city, thereby gradually losing its Batu Merah connection. The situation of the Butonese living in Kate-Kate is slightly different. Here I did not encounter clear examples of Eerie people who had the intention to sell their house with the aim to start living in another place. Yet, the Butonese from Eerie only constituted a small minority in the whole camp of Kate-Kate. This is a different picture compared to Hila-Tanah Putih and Iha-Liang. In these relocation sites, there were no people living who originated from another village. Moreover, there were explicit efforts to preserve the unity of the community. For instance, in Hila-Tanah Putih, a constant worry was the fact that newlywed couples would not have their own house within the site and would be forced to live somewhere else. It was feared that, in the long term, this could mean the end of their unity and collective identity as the Christians originating from Hila. Therefore, throughout 2007, different new houses were built at this site in order to provide all newlywed couples their own house.

8.3. Return to the home village

Related to this maintenance of a communal identity among relocated *adat* communities and the characterization of living in an incorrect place, was a prominent determination to return to the place one lived before the outbreak of the conflict. As I explained, the former village one lived in before the eviction still plays a central role and much of the property people possessed

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there is not considered lost. Yet, the non-*adat* communities primarily stated they wanted to reclaim lost property to be able to sell their lost possessions but a real discourse of return was not encountered on these sites. The state of the people on these sites can therefore be understood as being ‘in transition’. Whilst there is no acceptance yet of the new context of relocation/normality, it can be expected that this tenacious attachment to the status of refugee will be loosened once compensation has been awarded which is considered proportionate to the losses endured and the prospect for more viable and durable livelihood opportunities increases. Many people stated that they can reconcile themselves with their new habitat but they want fair compensation and the prospect of a viable and decent life. One can therefore imagine that a process of re-territorialization in which new communal identities are constructed within a new area will relatively quickly develop in these sites. Moreover, one noticed a growing mental alienation with regards to the place these people were living before the conflict. For instance, people in Kayu Tiga explicitly told that they no longer recognize the area they grew up in since so many new people have come to live in Batu Merah since the beginning of the *kerusuhan*. They no longer have the feeling Batu Merah is their original neighbourhood. In other words, they perceive the nature of this neighbourhood as fundamentally different compared to the time they still lived there. During the interviews I conducted in Kayu Tiga on different aspects of displacement, the story often went that Muslims who came to live in Batu Merah during the conflict were radicalized Muslims with strong anti-Christian feelings. In their view, this has altered the tolerant nature of their

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former neighbourhood.⁴ Proof of this is found in the fact that the area was the site of a strong Laskar Jihad presence during the conflict. A visual expression of the changing nature of their place, at least through the eyes of the Christians in Kayu Tiga, can be found in the wearing of the burka by some women nowadays in Batu Merah. Even if it would be possible to start living in Batu Merah, many people stated they would not feel at ease and therefore preferred to remain in Kayu Tiga or another place.

On the sites of Hila-Tanah Putih and Iha-Liang on the other hand, narratives of return to a historical home territory remain omnipresent despite the fact that both communities were relocated much earlier than the non-*adat* communities. There are no intentions to reclaim lost land with the aim of selling it, but rather the objective is to return. In Hila-Tanah Putih, this idea of return was somewhat contested with some people openly stating that their relocation is permanent and that it is no use to dream about ever returning to Hila. Yet, a majority still considered return to Hila as a priority and could not imagine their community would have to stay forever in Hila-Tanah Putih. This contestation can partly be explained by the fact that their status as an *adat* community is not entirely pure and is subject to divergent interpretations both within and outside this community. Suffice to say however that some families within this Christian community definitely belong to the indigenous

⁴ I wish to stress that I translate the feelings of many Christians living in Kayu Tiga rather than my own opinion about these matters. See also Duncan (2008) on return in North Maluku.

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adat law community of Hila and some families have very close ties with *adat* law communities due to intermarriages in Hila and Kaitetu through which they could obtain ownership rights over land. Furthermore, these people lived for some 300 years in Hila/Kaitetu, giving at least the feeling they possess a historical, *adat* relationship with the territory they were living on. On the other hand, this community has never been part of the *adat* system of village governance in Hila.

On the site of Iha-Liang, the idea of permanent relocation was totally out of the question and discussing this issue is largely taboo. Closely related to this is a fear that due to their relocation, their lands will be taken over by other communities and this would irrevocably lead to the permanent loss of their *adat* status. Borrowing this term from Lisa Malkki (1995a, 1995b), these communities can be considered as living ‘in exile’. In her work, Malkki compared Burundese refugees in Tanzania who lived in an urban setting with refugees living in a camp. Among the camp refugees, a collective identity developed of being a nation ‘in exile’. The town refugees on the other hand developed a more cosmopolitan, individual identity and were better integrated in local society. To a certain extent, these findings by Malkki reflect what was found among the internally displaced in Ambon. Although the word cosmopolitan is probably slightly exaggerated, the relocated non-indigenous communities showed a great willingness to integrate in the new place they were living, albeit livelihood opportunities were scarce. Also, the issue of their common descent and a related collective identity was less present

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compared to the relocated indigenous communities. In short, they behaved more pragmatic and individually oriented compared to their indigenous counterparts. The displaced indigenous communities on the other hand can be compared to the Burundese camp refugees as being 'in exile'. At first, this denotes some sort of 'aestheticizable realm' (Malkki 1995b: 513), including characteristics described above such as alienation, distance and loss. Being in exile is also inextricably linked to the notion of returning home. As some people in Iha-Liang stated, they feel like sojourners on a land that is not theirs. Yet, despite this determination to return, there seemed to be little concrete implementation of this plan. Conversely, discussions about the reclaiming of property with the aim to sell among relocated non-indigenous communities quickly turned concrete. People talked about strategies to obtain certain legal documents, lobbying high ranking civil servants or politicians or in the case of Kayu Tiga even directly asking me to search in Dutch archives to seek proof of the legitimate ownership of land by the GPM on which most Protestants lived in Batu Merah. When trying to unravel the strategies people in Hila-Tanah Putih or Iha-Liang had in mind in order to return home, answers remained elusive and most of the time, this was framed as a struggle that could take generations. For instance, when people in Hila-Tanah Putih compared their own situation to the people of Israel, this not only expressed a feeling of being driven out of a historical homeland but also referred to the decade long struggle it will take to reclaim this home land. Both in Hila-Tanah Putih and Iha-Liang, people stated that at best it would be future generations that could reclaim their *adat* land. Some farmers in Hila-Tanah

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Putih even admitted that in this regard their displacement could turn out to be crucial to the economic survival of their children in the longer run. As they stated, it is essential to keep the land of their home village in some sort of quarantine whereby they retrieve the ownership rights but they do not cultivate or inhabit these lands. After a few decades, when people would have forgotten about the religious tensions and land scarcity would be more pressing than today, their children could take over the place they formerly lived in. This would enable them to provide their children with new land for their houses and agricultural cultivation while they would remain in Hila-Tanah Putih. This was seen as the sole opportunity to give their children a decent livelihood in agriculture and to not let their children move to the city of Ambon or leave the island in search of job opportunities.

However, it would be a mistake to reduce return to an economic strategy. For instance, in the camp of Iha-Liang everybody agreed that livelihood opportunities were better in their site of relocation and return would likely result in the impoverishment of the community. In Iha on Saparua, the community indeed possessed ownership rights over land due to their indigenous status but the amount of land that could be accessed was extremely limited. Yet, despite some economic improvements, narratives about returning to Saparua remained omnipresent and seriously considering a permanent residence in Iha-Liang was taboo. Remarkably, some informal discussions with children who are too young to remember the violent expulsion of their community in 2000 revealed that they had a very idealized

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notion of their village in Saparua as being filled with fertile land and a sea full of fish without ever having been there. Some even thought it quite puzzling why their parents did not go back to this place considering all the advantages that would be encountered there.

While this distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous relocated communities in Ambon mirrors some of the contrasts found by Malkki between camp and town refugees, the explanation is fundamentally different. According to Malkki, the development of a collective 'in exile' identity among the camp refugees has to be situated within their forced migration (Malkki 1995a: 16). In other words, it are the differences in displacement (town versus camp) that explain the divergent development of these identities. In the case of Ambon however, these differences cannot be situated within the displacement itself as all four communities ended up in quite similar sites dispersed over the island. Rather, the contrasts encountered in Ambon should be explained by the differences in societal status (indigenous versus non-indigenous) these communities already possessed before their forced migration.

8.4. Instating a purified present

Rather than a feasible plan, narratives about returning to an idealized 'home territory' should be understood as an ideal reflecting a more general discourse

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in Ambon in search of an order and common ground that transcends religious differences. Among broad parts of the Ambonese population, government and local NGOs, there exists a sincere belief that *adat* has the potential to build bridges between the Christian and Muslim community by stressing a common identity based on Ambonese *adat*. Illustrative in this regard is the resurgence of *pela* which are traditional inter-village alliances between two or more villages. Some of these alliances already existed before the first colonial intrusions in the 16th century. Although different sorts of *pela* can be distinguished, they all basically are mechanisms of reciprocal mutual help in times of need between a few villages, independent from their religious background (Bartels 1977, 2000). For centuries, these *pela* relationships remained intact and throughout colonial rule, they were often used as solidarity mechanisms among Moluccans against the foreign, colonial rulers. Due to these threats from colonial expansion, many of these *pela* relationships were even set up throughout the period of Dutch domination (Bartels 1977: 134-140). From the late 1970s onwards however, these mechanisms started losing relevance (Bartels 2000). One of the reasons was a purification of religion in which Christian and Muslim religious leaders increasingly condemned all things ‘traditional’ such as *pela* as mere superstition. For instance, throughout the eighties, different academics from the local Unpatti university researching and promoting local culture, were threatened different times being thrown out of the GPM for their interest in *adat*. Yet, since the end of the conflict through so-called ‘*bikin panas pela*’ (heating up the *pela*) ceremonies, these mechanisms have been increasingly used to bring about a

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reconciliation between Christians and Muslims, despite the fact that these village alliances were never set up for this purpose (Bartels 2000).

Apart from this aim of healing wounds in a religiously fractured society, the resurgence of *adat* also fits within a broader, more long-term vision of preventing future conflicts, in particular the sort of religious communal violence witnessed recently. Within this idea, *adat* - and in particular a common identity based on *adat* - has to stand as a defense against external influences that want to divide Ambonese society. This idea is strongly related with the provocateur hypothesis I explained in chapter 3. Generally, these provocateurs are considered to be military elites with links to the old New Order regime and the inner circle around Suharto. Interestingly, in many cases, these actors are placed alongside those of the Dutch colonial era. This idea that alien provocateurs in 1999 managed to incite Christians and Muslims against each other is often portrayed as a prolongation of the Dutch politics of divide and rule in which the Ambonese made the same mistake of letting foreign influences divide them. Many people expressed the opinion that the whole Ambonese history is characterized by external manipulation in order to extract the rich resources in the region and the Ambonese have always been too stupid not to unite against these divide and rule tactics.

Since the end of the conflict, many people say they have learned from these mistakes of the past and will no longer allow external influences to pit them against each other. As both local NGO activists, traditional leaders and

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ordinary peasants stated, from now on the Ambonese will have to do it by themselves and search for common ground beyond religious differences. The guiding principle of this view is found in *adat*. In this regard, the resurgence of *adat* in Ambon reflects a strange mix of conservative elements presented in a future-oriented agenda. There is a tendency to claim that the purity of Ambonese society has too often been intruded on - one could almost say contaminated - by alien influences, largely explaining the many wars in Ambonese history. As a consequence, Ambonese society needs to be purified from these external influences and a traditional Ambonese order needs to be restored in order to avoid future conflict. This somewhat conservative response can also be perceived in the resurgence of the viewing of *adat* through a generational framework. In this discourse, the lack of knowledge about *adat* among youngsters is seen as one of the key reasons why they could be easily mobilized into violent conflict. Therefore, a form of external modernity to which particularly young people tend to be receptive needs to be replaced by a more rigid and 'correct' knowledge of local culture and history in order to avoid future troubles.

Yet, at the same time, it would be wrong to denigrate this resurgence of *adat* as a return to the past. It fits within a future-oriented strategy and many Ambonese see it as the way to continue after the fall of the New Order and the

end of the conflict.⁵ In this regard, the revitalization of *adat* primarily aims to install a purified present rather than a purified past. As Frost (2004) points out, the resurgence of *adat* in the Moluccan archipelago takes multiple forms, varying between essentialist notions about reinstating a true ‘historically correct’ *adat* and more flexible approaches aiming to re-imagine tradition. Yet, in relation to *adat* as a tool of reconciliation, static interpretations were marginal and most people agreed that *adat* had to serve as an inspiration to search for common ground in the future. Therefore, the deployment of *adat* in terms of peace building is largely uncontested and has received an almost talismanic status in Ambonese society.

8.5. The territorial repairing of a broken order

Discourses about return among these two relocated indigenous *adat* communities, mirrors this overall wish to mentally and spatially reinstate a natural and harmonious *adat* order. This ideal is not only about the spatial reparation of a pre-conflict order that has been heavily disturbed since the outbreak of violence. Rather, *adat* needs to be revitalized in a much more radical manner as the loss of *adat* throughout the New Order is one of the factors which explains the inter-religious violence which occurred once this

⁵ This is particularly the case for indigenous Ambonese (Muslim and Christian). These opinions about *adat* as reconciliation are less present among non-indigenous communities.

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New Order ended. *Adat* was already considered weak and the conflict and subsequent forced migration have only further reinforced this weakness. An essential step to halting this process is the return of relocated *adat* communities to the place where they possess a genealogical *adat* relationship with the land. The ideal of *adat* assumes some sort of geographical order in which indigenous communities possess a genealogical and historical relationship with a certain territory. In addition, the attachment to return should be framed by ideals of unity. In the case of Iha-Liang, this is closely related to the wish to be reunited as a community. Due to arguments over where to relocate in 2002, this community has split up with one part going to Iha-Liang and one part going to Sepa on the island of Seram. Therefore, their relocation is linked to the breaking up of their community and the loss of their *bapak raja* who decided to go to Seram. This was a traumatic experience and left the community feeling deserted, one could almost say orphaned. The desire to repatriate is linked to the reunion of their community as a whole *adat* community and many people even state that return to Iha-Saparua only makes sense if the whole community can be reunited. Interestingly, this recent break up is historically aligned with events which began in the 17th century when the old Iha kingdom took up arms against the Dutch colonizers. Numerous wars against the colonial oppressor not only divided the Iha kingdom into Christian and Muslim parts but also led to large population movements in which different parts of the kingdom's population decided to relocate to different places in the region. The expulsion and further division of the Muslim Iha community who lived at Saparua is lined up with these previous population

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movements and a further breakup of the once mighty Iha kingdom. Moreover, motives behind the historical break up are ascribed to external forces. In this community, the idea that alien provocateurs incited the conflict - just like the Dutch did in the past - is also omnipresent. Return to the home territory in Saparua therefore stands as a firm denial to let alien influences further divide them.

These ideals about unity also have an inter-religious connotation in which removal from the genealogical *adat* territory is understood as a loss of all sorts of inter-religious solidarity mechanisms. Typical in this regard are the constant references to *gotong royong* which are practices of inter-religious reciprocal helpfulness that go beyond religious fault lines and are considered a vital part of *adat*. A typical example of *gotong royong* is the construction/reparation of the roof of the mosque by a Christian community and vice versa. These sorts of practices were often cited among the people of Hila-Tanah Putih as proof of their integration which transcended religious identities in the area they lived in before their forced eviction. Due to their forced eviction and subsequent relocation, these *gotong royong* practices have gone lost which is deeply felt as symbolizing the mental estrangement between the Christian community of Hila-Tanah Putih and their former neighbouring Muslim villages.⁶ Similar ideals of inter-religious unity and

⁶ Just like in the case of customary ownership rights which are gradually being regained since 2005/2006, this can also happen with these *gotong royong* practices. At the time of research however, these mechanisms were not yet reinstated.

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harmony - more particularly the existence of different social security mechanisms the Muslim community of Iha enjoyed with neighbouring Christian villages on the island of Saparua - were cited in Iha-Liang. An example includes the picking up of the cloves. As explained, the village of Iha in Saparua only had limited land. Therefore, an agreement existed with surrounding Christian villages that the people of Iha were allowed to pick up cloves for selling when these had fallen on the ground during certain parts of the year. Another example is the free cutting of coconut during certain parts of the season in the village of Ihamahu as vast farming land was particularly meager in Iha. The disruption of these mutual social security mechanisms has left a scar that cannot solely be understood in a purely economic sense. Rather, this fits into a larger picture about the disruption of unity by the violence and the fact that relocation - understood here as permanent displacement - has only further reinforced this disruption. If this disruption is not restored, people fear their children will ultimately forget about these inter-religious solidarity mechanisms considered as essential to preventing future violence. Yet, there is more at stake than just repairing the solidarity mechanism that existed prior to the conflict. As people explained, these relationships based on *adat* were not that strong any more before 1999. A typical example that is referred to is their relationship with Ihamahu, a neighbouring Christian brotherhood village descending from the same old Iha kingdom. The weakening of inter-religious ties based on *adat* serves as an explanation for the people of Iha-Liang for why this neighbouring village did not protect them when they were attacked by other Christian villages. In other

words, the weakening of *adat* ties between these two villages serves as one of the explanations why the Muslim community of Iha was forcibly evicted. Therefore, rather than a restoration of the pre-conflict *adat* relationship, it is the whole relationship as such that needs to be revitalized. The first prerequisite in this process therefore is the return to the historical home village on Saparua.

8.6. Conclusion

Most authors agree that *adat* contains two related meanings. First, *adat* can be understood as a tool of socio-political bargaining in order to access resources and second, as a broader ideal of unity and harmony. Despite this dual meaning, in particular the revitalization of *adat* in its first, politicized sense has been stressed in many publications. Since the end of the New Order in Indonesia in 1998, certain opportunities have emerged to deploy *adat* in socio-political struggles, in particular at the province and district level. Less attention so far has been paid to *adat* as an ideal of unity, harmony and a blueprint how an ideal society should look like. In particular in environments characterized by high-intensity violence, this second meaning of *adat* proves to be omnipresent as this serves as an inspiration to reconcile a fractured society. Obviously, this fits within a wider, almost worldwide, discourse in which local culture is increasingly applied in efforts to bring about peace building and reconciliation (Lederach 1997). Also in Ambon, this belief that

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cohesion and order based on a common *adat* needs to be restored is present. This is particularly the case in the way relocated indigenous communities cope with their forced relocation. In four relocation sites that have been studied, it was noted how relocation in a legal sense was not followed by relocation in a mental sense. Although relocation was considered as the end of a cycle by the local government and aid agencies, these communities did not accept this new context of 'normality'. Instead, the place they live is referred to as a refugee place.

Elaborating on the attachment to this 'refugeeness', some remarkable differences could be encountered in the four different sites. Among the two relocated non-indigenous communities, the tenacity to the status of refugee should be understood as part of a deliberate strategy to reclaim lost property. Many of these forcibly migrated populations perceive themselves as the losers of the conflict because most of their property has been taken over throughout their eviction. Therefore, constant attempts are made to reclaim these lost properties. Moreover, because livelihood opportunities are limited in most of these sites due to restrained access to agricultural land and an overall slow economic recovery, many people still think they have a legitimate right to reconstruction funds. Accepting a new context of relocation/normality would imply that people distance from these rights. Yet, people did not express a willingness to return to the place they lived before the outbreak of the conflict. For this reason, these communities can be seen as being in transition.

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Although similar frustrations could be encountered among the two relocated indigenous *adat* communities, narratives about return were omnipresent. Among these communities, there exists a deep-rooted feeling that one is living in a historically incorrect place. This was particularly apparent in Iha-Liang where people openly stated that despite notable economic improvements, they do not feel at home and discussing the issue of staying in Liang was even considered not done. Therefore, these communities can be seen as living in exile as they express feelings of alienation and loss, remain strongly attached to a pre-conflict communal identity and consider return as imperative. Rather than a feasible plan for economic improvement, these narratives about returning to an idealized ‘home territory’ should be understood as an ideal reflecting a more general discourse in Ambon in search of a common ground based on *adat* that transcends religious differences. Return therefore mirrors an overall wish to mentally and spatially reinstate a natural and harmonious *adat* order that needs to be restored in order to avoid future violence.

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Conclusion

It is a regularly voiced conviction among Ambonese Christians and Muslims working in peace building and reconciliation that all Ambonese people were subjected to loss and suffering throughout the conflict. Ultimately, it was this shared suffering which made people put an end to the inter-religious hostilities. This belief is closely related to the search for a common identity, in this case founded on Ambonese *adat*, in order to overcome religious differences. As a young Muslim Ambonese woman who works on trauma counseling among children stated: ‘We started to realize it was us, the Ambonese people, who were losing and the others (considered the Javanese military in this conversation) who were on the winning hand.’ This dissertation has illustrated that underneath this superficial rhetoric, lies a more complex picture. Most, if not all, Ambonese have indeed suffered throughout the recent inter-religious communal warfare. Nevertheless, this constant emphasis on the ‘suffering-aspect’ misses the point that Ambonese were and still are agents shaping, interpreting, ending, imagining and coping with the conflict in different and complex ways. This agency-oriented perspective runs through this dissertation like a red thread and differs from most studies on communal violence in Ambon, which generally attempt to understand this conflict from a structuralist and top-down perspective.

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At a first level, I related this agency-oriented perspective to the question of how and why ‘ordinary folk’ engaged in or disengaged from the conflict. More particularly, I studied the reasons why and how people were expelled from certain areas, and why many of them could not return to these places once the high-intensity violence subsided. Through this indirect angle of forced migration, I have attempted to illustrate how conflict brought about particular opportunities to access space by chasing away religious minorities. These expulsions could often be traced back to long-term communal tensions, in many cases already dating back to colonial times. This emptied space was then used for farming or certain activities within the informal economy. This observation partly explains the profound and rapid escalation in time and space of this conflict and criticizes images of religious zealots being driven by irrational fervor or the naïve Ambonese simply being provoked by external provocateurs. At the same time, this observation warns against explanations which view the violence solely as a consequence of national, political changes after the fall of Suharto in May 1998, despite this being a crucial turning point. Instead, there are overlapping narratives as to when ‘the conflict’ started and these narratives do not solely relate to the question of contested state access. Moreover, looking through the recent communal conflict through this indirect perspective of forced migration refutes images of an all-out religious war. Instead, many people disengaged from the violence or even protected religious minorities at risk.

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These findings are closely linked to the successful attempts that have been made to legally enforce these expulsions through the formalization of an exclusive interpretation of customary *adat* law. New land legislation in which indigenous *adat* law communities are recognized as the only legitimate owners of the land have been actively used to block processes of return or the reclaiming of lost property by non-indigenous, displaced communities. Put together, parts of society attempted to improve their socio-economic status through violent and legal means. This leads to a refinement of the notion that all Ambonese lost and suffered as a result of the inter-religious violence. Ambonese society did not consist of an amorphous mass following greedy elites. Instead, the Ambonese were proactive agents shaping the conflict in their own way. Furthermore, the understanding of a conflict does not stop the day a conflict begins. Although this argument may seem evident, there is scarce literature on communal violence in post-Suharto Indonesia, and Ambon in particular, which pays attention to the ongoing dynamics of violence. In much of the literature, a historical overview is given to explain the build-up to the start of the conflict, but deeper elaborations on the genesis of the conflict, remain limited. In this dissertation, it has been illustrated how the violent expulsions of certain groups were not necessarily directly related to the reasons why the *kerusuhan* began on January 19th, 1999. To a certain extent, one can claim that forced expulsions continued once the high-intensity violence ended, as some of these population movements came to be legally confirmed.

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Aside from an elaboration on the rationales behind forced migration and permanent relocation, I have attempted to explain how people responded to these evictions by renegotiating, regaining or reimagining access to certain places. As explained in the introduction, any conflict is more than just destruction but inevitably contains a developmental side. In studying this developmental side of the inter-religious communal warfare, the everyday life experiences of these evicted populations were taken as the starting point of the analysis. On the other hand, this dissertation has clearly illustrated how agency is constrained and survival strategies are not endless. This definitely holds true among the displaced, disadvantaged, and lower-class sections of society living in environments such as Ambon which are characterized by high levels of insecurity and profound economic decline. One can even doubt if the word strategy is a suitable term for the everyday socio-economic experiences of these communities. In general, the word strategy - in particular livelihood strategy - is understood as a long-term response (White, Titus and Boomgaard, 2001). This long-term response presupposes a certain stability, predictability, one could even say control over the situation one lives in. In conflict-ridden Ambon, this control was, to say the least, limited. This can also be derived from the language people sometimes used to describe the *kerusuhan*. For instance, some people referred to this as a hurricane or a tsunami, thereby sketching the impression this was a disaster over which man did not have any control. In this regard, following Michel de Certeau (1984), what many of these people did throughout and after the conflict can be seen as tactics rather than strategies. According to de Certeau (1984:34-35), tactics

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should be understood as ‘a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus’. This implies that the space where this tactic is performed is the ‘space of the other’, a space which is not his/her own and over which the agent has limited or no control at all. The tactic, in contrast to the strategy, does not have the option of deliberate planning based on an ability to predict and can therefore be considered as the art of the weak.

This limited agency among forcibly migrated communities is illustrated in chapters 4 and 7. In these chapters, I demonstrated how in urban environments plagued by violence, attempts to obtain access to the informal economy, in particular petty trading activities, became a manner of coping with the economic decline brought about by the conflict. This process brought women to the forefront in the household in terms of income generation and provoked a crisis of masculinity due to the implosion of the formal economy in which many men were traditionally engaged. It was only once the high-intensity violence started to wane that the informal transport economy became a major attraction for many men at the lower class end of society. As important, however, is the observation that the opportunities or constraints to engaging in the informal economy were, amongst others, shaped by the spatial transformations brought about by the conflict. Therefore, this initial study at the household level of society served as a fruitful entry point to understanding how inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in Ambonese society and the pre-conflict stereotypes ascribed to certain of these ethnic and religious identities have fundamentally altered. In particular, Christians faced

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opportunities of taking over informal economies in mono-religious Christian areas which before the conflict were largely monopolized by lower class Muslim migrants. In a somewhat contradictory manner, these spatial opportunities brought about a downward social mobility for Christians in terms of societal prestige. Throughout the conflict, Christians - traditionally considered as the elite of Ambonese society - became increasingly engaged in 'poor man's jobs' such as the tricycle taxi business or petty trade. Throughout and after the conflict, this has given rise to a renewed vigorous competition which is concentrated around the issue of place in urban environments in order to perform these economic activities. In the city of Ambon, Christian women who became involved in petty trading throughout the *kerusuhan* have been largely thrown out due to the centrality of the Mardika market which is situated in a Muslim area. In the Christian village of Passo on the other hand, they could hold on to their places at the market and Muslims have been - literally - pushed to the rear of the market. The same goes for the tricycle business in which Muslims have lost their pre-conflict taxi stands in areas which became Christian dominated. Within this spatial and social transformation, lower class Muslim migrants have thus lost their near monopoly over these sectors within the informal economy.

This link between spatial and social transformation is also pertinent with regards to access to arable land. As has been illustrated, there are notable differences between the relocation sites studied with regards to land access. It is therefore hard to put forward an all encompassing conclusion on this issue

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apart from the fact that for all relocated communities, access to arable land is characterized by high levels of insecurity as this is based on oral users' rights. However, throughout certain relocation sites, access to land is hardly available, which has led to a dramatic increase in impoverishment and social vulnerability. This is particularly the case amongst the Muslim Butonese community of Eerie, currently living in the relocation camp of Kate-Kate, who at best access land through illegal squatting. These squatting practices are a perfect example of tactics, instead of strategies, being a weapon of the weak. In an almost literal sense in this regard, as de Certeau (1984:37) states, the space of the tactic is the space of the other, with all the related disadvantages.

In the last chapter, I have attempted to elaborate on subjective experiences and the way issues such as conflict, forced migration and return are imagined. I increasingly came to realize throughout my fieldwork that apart from more classic, 'real' developmental and legal issues, forced migration is inevitably an emotional experience. Illustrative of this is the fact that the narrow interpretation of *adat* as customary resource management as it has been generally used throughout this thesis, has been complemented with a broader interpretation of *adat* as ideals and guiding motives of unity, culture and purity. More in particular, I attempted to illustrate how discourses about *adat* as reconciliation obtained a territorial interpretation among relocated indigenous communities. Rather than expressing a purely rational, economic agenda, the urge to return expresses a willingness to install a reinvigorated *adat* order and a purified present where mental and spatial religious

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segregation have been overcome. At the basis of this territorial interpretation of *adat* lies the denial of accepting relocation as a new normality.

All these different examples illustrate how people did more than just suffer during the recent inter-religious communal warfare but shaped, interpreted, sustained, imagined, ended and coped with the conflict and the interrelated forced migration in complex and dynamic ways. Nevertheless, there is also a second reason why the opinion that all Ambonese suffered throughout the conflict needs to be refined. The Ambonese population is not a homogeneous mass and, although I never used this normative term in my research, the level of 'loss' has at least been unevenly distributed. This observation stands central to understanding the emergence of new arenas of contention, resentment and reconciliation in Ambon since the end of the violence. It is illustrative that I have never heard one Butonese stating he thinks all people in Ambon have suffered. Many Butonese have largely lost the near-monopoly they had before the conflict on the informal economy. Moreover, an awful lot of them have been violently evicted and prohibited to return. These people find themselves currently in dire economic circumstances due to limited land access and some have started engaging in squatting practices, which are considered as having no legal ground whatsoever, not only by the host community but also by themselves. This has increased tensions with the host community and enforced the image among many Ambonese, of the Butonese being very aggressive in their economic strategies.

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In this regard, the recent communal conflict in Ambon has created new forms of contention which are fundamental to understand current Ambonese society. On the other hand, one should be careful not to relate everything now happening in Ambon to the recent inter-religious communal warfare. It sometimes struck me how Ambonese tended to explain all (negative) human behavior they witnessed as a consequence of the *kerusuhan*. This could range from small children fighting, aggressive driving, domestic violence against women, traffic jams, dirt in the city... Often, this was explained as resulting from stress or trauma experienced throughout the conflict (see also Spyer 2004). It is important to keep in mind that not everything can be explained away by the conflict and Ambon is still part of Indonesia and a globalized world economy and media. Due to the agency-oriented focus on changes at the micro-level of society and how these link up with changes at the intermediate level of Ambonese society, I have to admit that these global influences have sometimes been overlooked in my research. Moreover, many of the findings in this dissertation are not exactly new but rather, as the title of my dissertation suggests, should be understood as changes. For instance, access to certain sectors within the informal economy (Von Benda Beckmann 2004) or land (Van Fraassen 1972, Von Benda Beckmann 1990) already were pressing concerns before the outbreak of the *kerusuhan* but nevertheless, have been fundamentally transformed. The same can be said about certain ethnic fault lines which already were pertinent before the outbreak of the violence in 1999.

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Many of these ‘new’ forms of contention are closely related to evictions brought about during the conflict and subsequent spatial transformations. A better insight into these forced expulsions explains how in certain places, processes of reconciliation have been relatively easy, while in other cases, communal relations remain chilly, to say the least. It is therefore interesting to return once again to chapter 3 where I described the violent expulsion of the Christians of Hila/Kaitetu and Waai. In the case of the Waai, rapprochement with Tulehu since their forced eviction has been relatively easy. As early as their escape to Passo, trade networks between the village of Tulehu and the Waai community emerged inducing the first overture. Similarly, throughout 2002, people from Waai regularly visited Tulehu. The return of the Waai community has never been opposed by the majority of people from Tulehu and as early as August 2000, leaders from Tulehu expressed their desire to the governor to facilitate the repatriation of the Waai community. This was not the case in Liang where a stern opposition against the return of the Waai people existed, although, being an indigenous *adat* law community, they have ultimately been able to return to Waai. One reason behind this is the fact that the border dispute which was central to the escalation of the violence has remained a point of contention. In particular among the people of Waai, there remains deep resentment and a sense that they have lost out as a result of the conflict. Many explicitly state that ‘whenever they have the chance’, they will do what they can to reclaim this lost land which has been illegally taken away by the people of Liang. Some even admit they have deliberately stored weapons gathered during the recent conflict with the future aim of forcibly

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reclaiming their land. Disconcertingly, this recent episode of violence and displacement is therefore presented as a chapter in an unfinished story that will likely have a sequel, according to some Waai villagers. In other words, contentions already existing before the conflict continue, albeit in a sharper form. In the Hila and Kaitetu case, rapprochement has been much easier between Kaitetu and the relocated Christian community, principally because the clove and other trees owned by the Christians in Kaitetu were left standing. From 2005 onwards, the Christians gradually started spending time in Kaitetu to harvest the trees, staying with friends and relatives. In contrast, relations with Hila remain chilly, in particular between the customary landowners, who took over the land the Christians lived on, and who are considered as ‘big liars’ by these Christians. These sorts of resentments are further enforced by the dire economic circumstances many people find themselves in. This is the case for many forcibly migrated communities but can also be felt in many other communities which fell outside the scope of this research. It should also not be forgotten that, compared to the period of high-intensity conflict, the economic performance in the province of Maluku has improved but there is definitely no ‘economic boom’. A more sustained economic growth therefore would definitely help to ease some of the tensions currently at play.

How much of a destabilizing effect on Ambonese society do all these tensions have? It is definitely true that inter-religious and inter-ethnic relationships can at times be tense and result in low-intensity violence as can be observed by

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incidents in a place like the market of Mardika. On the other hand, recent cases of low-intensity violence and the seriousness by which these were handled prove that the security apparatus is better equipped than was the case in 1999. Moreover, as far as I could see, there were no organizations mobilizing around these particular grievances through a discourse of violence and armed conflict. In chapter 6, I shortly discussed an ethnic Butonese organization like the BKMM-Sultra and the strong feelings of resentment expressed by them. However, their discourse was an inclusive one as their main desire was wanting to be seen and treated like normal Ambonese with the same legal rights. They framed this struggle in a democratic framework in which they intend to link up with certain powerful political parties or even establish their own party. They even admitted that money politics, typical for the high patrimonial character of the Ambonese political landscape, will be essential to this struggle. Nevertheless, the issue of arms, violence, the establishment of coordination posts etc. never came to the fore.

At last, I wish to stress that the situation in Ambon since 2002 cannot be seen as a 'neither war, nor peace' situation, the concept by which many other so-called post-conflict regions where violence tends to remain endemic after the signing of an official peace agreement, has been explained (Menkhaus 2004, Richards 2005). Despite all sorts of resentments still being present, large-scale, collective violence has substantially dropped in Ambon. Since a couple of years, also the 'terrorist' sort of violence conducted by radicalized minority groups has ended. Apart from the many definitional flaws and the lack of

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quantitative or qualitative parameters indicating when this post-conflict phase is over, this is the prime reason I decided not to integrate this term in my dissertation. Maybe the best illustration of this fundamentally different context was found in the tourism department where in late 2007, plans were mentioned to develop a kite surfing project in the bay of Ambon. This is the same bay where a couple of years before, people were forced to take speedboats in order to avoid being shot at by snipers. Many people I spoke to expressed a sincere belief and relief that the conflict is over and explicitly referred to current Ambon as '*sekarang aman*', now there is peace. I sincerely hope, and tend to believe, it will stay this way.

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Suara Maluku, July 19, 1999: 'Tadi Malam, Terjadi Insiden di Diponegoro'

Suara Maluku, August 5, 2000: 'Waai digempur, 23 tewas, dua luka berat'

Suara Maluku, September 24, 1999: 'Kerusuhan Ambon Ikut Dimainkan Elit Politik Nasional'

Suara Maluku, December 6, 1999: 'Rusuh Lagi di Seram, 32 Orang Tewas, 6 Luka'

Suara Pembaruan, December 29, 1999: 'Ambon Bagaikan Medan Perang'

Suara Maluku, Desember 28, 1999: 'Gereja Silo Terbakar, Ambon Lautan Api'

Suara Maluku, January 3, 2000: '64 orang tewas, 5 buah gereja dibakar'

Suara Maluku, January 12, 2000: 'Wiranto Bermain dalam Kerusuhan Ambon'

Suara Maluku, May 19, 2000: 'Gereja Petra, 50-an Rumah - Puskesmas Dibakar, 100-an Luka-luka. 23 Tewas, Pangdam Minta Laporan Danyon 303'

Kompas, June 24, 2000: 'Orang Luar Dilarang Datang ke Maluku'

Siwalima, August 7, 2000: 'Ja'afar Umar Thalib: Kudamati-Passo Tunggu Waktunya'

Gatra, September 16, 2000: 'Mereka Bersenjata'

Siwalima, September 25, 2000: 'Pia Diserang, 5 Luka-luka, 75 Rumah Musnah Terbakar'

Suara Maluku, September 27, 2000: 'Hative Besar: Lautan Api, 9 Orang Tewas, 17 Luka-Luka'

Siwalima, October 11, 2000: 'Suli Digempur, aparat dipaksa naik gunung'

Suara Maluku, October 13, 2000: 'Kali ini, Gatik dan Halong 'Giliran' Diserang'

Siwalima, 28 September, 2000: 'Ribuan Massa Kristen Serukan Intervensi PBB'

Siwa Lima, December 2, 2000: 'Kantor Gubernur Maluku Dilempari Bom Molotov'

Suara Maluku, 29 January, 2001: 'Yongab Sita 622 Bom dan 400 Peluru AK di Hatuallang'

Suara Maluku, 22 May, 2001: 'Korban Insiden Soya Kecil dan Karpan Bertambah, 9 Meninggal'

ANNEX

Questioner

Nama (optional).....

Alamat.....

Sudah berapa lama tinggal di camp ini.....

Berapa anggota keluarga (berapa banyak orang tinggal dalam keluarga ini).....

1. Informasi tentang **bapak**

1. Pendidikan.....

2. Pekerjaan

2.1. Sebelum konflik, apakah bapak bekerja

2.1.1. Jika Ya

a. Pekerjaan apa yang dimiliki

Pekerjaan	Ya/tidak	Status	Keterangan
Pegawai negeri			
Pegawai swasta			
Wiraswasta/Usaha Sendiri			
Petani			
Nelayan			
Pedagang (di pasar)			
Buruh bangunan			
Buruh pelabuhan			
Pemanbantu rumah tangga			
Sopir			
Lain-lain			

b. Lokasi dimana.....

c. Berapa jam sehari.....

d. Berapa besar penghasilan per bulan

≤ 500.000	
500.000 - 1.000.000	
1000000≤	

2.1.2. Jika tidak; apa aktivitas sehari-hari

2.2. Sekarang selama konflik, apakah bapak masih bekerja? (Ya/tidak)

2.2.1. Jika tidak, dan bapak bekerja di tempat yang baru, berilah informasi tentang pekerjaan yang baru

a. Pekerjaan apa yang dimiliki

Pekerjaan	Ya/tidak	Status	Keterangan
Pegawai negeri			
Pegawai swasta			
Wiraswasta/Usaha Sendiri			
Petani			
Nelayan			
Pedagang (di pasar)			
Buruh bangunan			
Buruh pelabuhan			
Pemanbantu rumah tangga			
Sopir			
Lain-lain			

b. Lokasi dimana.....

c. Berapa jam sehari.....

d. Berapa besar penghasilan per bulan

≤ 500.000	
500.000 - 1.000.000	
1000000≤	

e. Mengapa berganti pekerjaan

2.1.2. Jika tidak; apa aktivitas sehari-hari

2.3. Setelah konflik, apakah bapak bekerja

2.1.1. Jika Ya

a. Pekerjaan apa yang dimiliki

Pekerjaan	Ya/tidak	Status	Keterangan
Pegawai negeri			
Pegawai swasta			
Wiraswasta/Usaha Sendiri			
Petani			
Nelayan			
Pedagang (di pasar)			
Buruh bangunan			
Buruh pelabuhan			
Pemanbantu rumah tangga			
Sopir			
Lain-lain			

b. Lokasi dimana.....

c. Berapa jam sehari.....

d. Berapa besar penghasilan per bulan

≤ 500.000	
500.000 - 1.000.000	
1000000≤	

e. Alasan untuk bekerja

2.1.2. Jika tidak; apa aktivitas sehari-hari

2. Informasi tentang ibu

1. Pendidikan.....

2. Pekerjaan

2.1. Sebelum konflik, apakah ibu bekerja

2.1.1. Jika Ya

a. Pekerjaan apa yang dimiliki

Pekerjaan	Ya/tidak	Status	Keterangan
Pegawai negeri			
Pegawai swasta			
Wiraswasta/Usaha Sendiri			
Petani			
Nelayan			
Pedagang (di pasar)			
Buruh bangunan			
Buruh pelabuhan			

Pemanbantu rumah tangga			
Sopir			
Lain-lain			

b. Lokasi dimana.....

c. Berapa jam sehari.....

d. Berapa besar penghasilan per bulan

≤ 500.000	
500.000 - 1.000.000	
$1000000 \leq$	

2.1.2. Jika tidak; apa aktivitas sehari-hari

2.2. Sekarang selama konflik, apakah ibu masih bekerja? (Ya/tidak)

2.2.1. Jika tidak, dan ibu bekerja di tempat yang baru, berilah informasi tentang pekerjaan yang baru

a. Pekerjaan apa yang dimiliki

Pekerjaan	Ya/tidak	Status	Keterangan
Pegawai negeri			
Pegawai swasta			
Wiraswasta/Usaha Sendiri			
Petani			
Nelayan			
Pedagang (di pasar)			
Buruh bangunan			
Buruh pelabuhan			
Pemanbantu rumah tangga			
Sopir			

Lain-lain			
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b. Lokasi dimana.....

c. Berapa jam sehari.....

d. Berapa besar penghasilan per bulan

≤ 500.000	
500.000 - 1.000.000	
1000000≤	

e. Mengapa berganti pekerjaan

2.1.2. Jika tidak; apa aktivitas sehari-hari

2.3. Setelah konflik, apakah ibu bekerja

2.1.1. Jika Ya

a. Pekerjaan apa yang dimiliki

Pekerjaan	Ya/tidak	Status	Keterangan
Pegawai negeri			
Pegawai swasta			
Wiraswasta/Usaha Sendiri			
Petani			
Nelayan			
Pedagang (di pasar)			
Buruh bangunan			
Buruh pelabuhan			

Pemanbantu rumah tangga			
Sopir			
Lain-lain			

b. Lokasi dimana.....

c. Berapa jam sehari.....

d. Berapa besar penghasilan per bulan

≤ 500.000	
500.000 - 1.000.000	
$1000000 \leq$	

e. Alasan untuk bekerja

2.1.2. Jika tidak; apa aktivitas sehari-hari